

NOVEMBER - 1912

15 CENTS

# AINSLIE'S

THE MAGAZINE THAT ENTERTAINS



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THE MAGAZINE THAT ENTERTAINS

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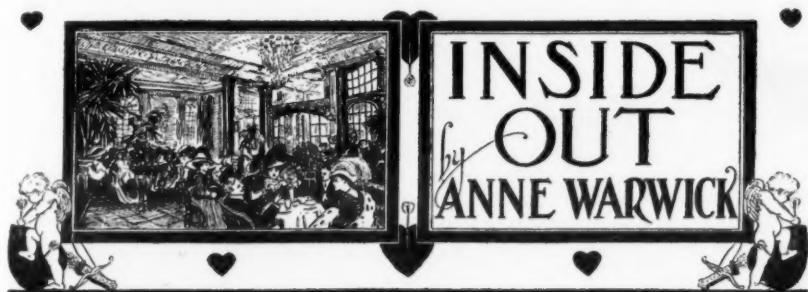
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# AINSLEE'S

VOL. XXX.

NOVEMBER, 1912.

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## CHAPTER I.

**T**EA hour at the Ritz. From the brilliant Place Vendôme motors glided in and out, depositing silken marvels, supple shapes of elegance, reckless lavishness of rare lace. There were the froth of delicate chiffons, the gleam of pearls, and the glint of diamonds, the fleet glimpse of satin slippers, the *vif* grace of an extraordinary hat; and over all the allure of soft skin and exotic perfumes mingling in heady confusion; there were the triumphant signposts that it was a woman's world, and that the woman had chosen it to be a hothouse. The satisfaction of her low laugh rang distinct, if insincere, through the rippling chatter.

Near the porte-cochère of the hotel two little *ouvrières* stood watching. One spoke:

"Ah, to have money! To be beautiful like these women, and to have money! Look, my Simone—look at that one in rose, just entering. Is she not exquisite? Her pearls—her paradise feather—ah, but life like this must be enchantment! To be one of these women!"

Meriel drew a quivering sigh. She was blond and delicately pretty.

"*Chut!*" Simone, who had black eyes and an imagination that stayed at home, shook herself impatiently. "These women! This one is wretched over unpaid bills; that one fears her husband will discover that she has a lover; a third"—Simone told them off with brusque little nods of her smooth head—"a third is worn out with too many gayeties, yet dare not stop. What else is there for her? A fourth eats her heart out for a position she cannot get—eh, *la, la!* No, *ma petite*, for myself I prefer the confectioner's shop and ten francs a week!"

Meriel, who was a milliner's apprentice, shook her head.

"No," she said wistfully; "it would be worth unhappiness—such a little unhappiness. To be beautiful, to make conquests, to—come home at night to a great soft bed and repose," burst forth little Meriel, who went home to a step-mother who beat her. "It would be worth it, Simone!"

"Well—perhaps," admitted Simone grudgingly. "One cannot tell—certainly they have the *air bien soigné*, these women. But—"

Just then out of a shadow in the doorway, where he had been standing,

an old gentleman came up to the two girls.

"Pardon," he said, addressing them with simple courtesy, though in a voice that was husky and cracked. "I have heard what you are saying, and I wish to propose something to you."

Meriel drew herself up. Simone's black eyes snapped. "It is time we were returning to the shop," she said, with dignity. "Madame will be furious, Meriel."

Meriel turned reluctantly. Her madame would be even more furious than Simone's. The girls had met by chance, each sent to do a commission.

"Wait!" begged the old gentleman. "Wait—you do not understand. What I propose to you is this: Simply that you select any two of these ladies of society at random—any two; that you go to their houses and study them, live with them day by day, and observe them. That you report to me—I am socialist, experimental—what you deduct, *and*"—he looked from one to the other of them earnestly—"if at the end of two weeks you can say to me honestly that you think either one of these ladies to be envied, if you think that they are better off than you, that their life is preferable to yours, I will put either or both of you in a position to live as they do."

The girls were staring at him stupidly. Simone gave a ringing laugh.

"But no," said the old gentleman, looking at her steadily out of his eyes shaded with black-rimmed spectacles, "do not be skeptical. I am old; I am rich. All I have for pleasure is the making of experiments, and social experiments interest me the most. Here is my card." He held one to each of the girls. "Anatole Dupont. Take it to the Crédit Lyonnais, and they will tell you if I am rich enough to do as I say. You shall have education, my dears, and *dots*, and husbands—if you want them! You shall have position, too—never fear. Anatole Dupont can arrange anything. But—"

Meriel and Simone were staring less incredulously now. They had crept up to him, with the unwilling fascination

of children being led into mischief. In the confusion of the many moters, the three were unnoticed.

"But you must tell *no one*—not even each other—the names of those ladies with whom you go to live. Nor must you spy on them at all, or seek information or comment from any of their servants. That is the condition of my offer; the conclusion must be from your own observation alone, uninfluenced, and—without possibility of harm to those ladies. If you betray them to any one, or ask any one to betray them to you," said the old gentleman simply, "my promise is void. You get nothing."

"But," began Meriel breathlessly, "but how to live, as you say, with these ladies, monsieur? How can we—"

"Yes," broke in Simone, "how can we, two little *midinettes*, gain entrance to the houses of rich people? Tell us that, monsieur!"

"It is easy. Quick—choose some one!"

"That lady in white," gasped Meriel, hanging on his words. "But she is *beautiful*!"

"Her brooch is unfastened," the old man said swiftly. "Tell her. When she speaks of reward, ask her for a place as maid."

Meriel darted over to the lady.

"Madame—madame!" she cried. The lady was alighting from her limousine. "Did some one call?" "Madame"—Meriel, under the eye of the haughty hotel flunky, almost lost courage—"you are losing your brooch. From the curb I saw that it was unfastened. Pardon, madame."

The lady's fingers felt quickly for the handsome jewel. It was, indeed, unfastened, dangling.

"But you were very kind, little girl," she said graciously, in a low, strangely sweet voice. "I must give you something." She fumbled in her heavy gold purse.

But Meriel broke in eagerly:

"Please, madame—if madame would be so good, so kind—do not give me money. I am in need of work, madame; I do not wish money. I wish



only to work and earn my living. If madame would take me in her service—if madame had, perhaps, need of an extra maid? Or——” She stopped shyly.

The lady looked at her, astonished. Here, indeed, was an odd little type, who preferred work to fifty francs! She put back the money into her purse with a little laugh.

“But if you are so industrious I must certainly find something for you. Come to this number to-morrow at twelve o’clock.”

She gave the girl a card, looked at her curiously for a moment, and passed on into the hotel.

Meriel gazed after her. She was, indeed, beautiful—an angelic oval face, with great wide-set brown eyes, and ripples of golden-brown hair. And her laugh! The little *ouvrière* sped back.

“She has engaged me!” she cried to the two who were waiting. “Madame has engaged me—for twelve o’clock to-morrow. And Simone?” She turned to her friend anxiously.

“*Merci!* Simone also has a place.” That young lady tossed her head with some pride. “While you were gone, monsieur urged on me to run against a little dog belonging to one lady I liked—oh, but gently! He gave only one little squeal, the darling! Then I cry shame on the *gamin* who has done this—there is, indeed, a small boy running away across the place—and catch up the dog and hand him to madame. She is grateful. ‘You like dogs?’ she asks. ‘But, madame, I adore them!’ I reply. And you know, Meriel, that is true. ‘Hm! I wish you would come and take mine out,’ she says thoughtfully. ‘I have four, and I know that my maid, when she exercises them, ill treats them. Come to-morrow to——’”

“Take care!” warned the old gentleman. “No addresses—or names. So, then, my children, the experiment is started, *hein?* But you will remember my address, and come twice a week to report—twenty-two Rue de Provence. Come on Saturday. My office hours are on the card.”

The two girls had begun to chatter

excitedly together. But Simone, the practical, caught the old gentleman’s arm suddenly.

“And what of the positions we have now?” she demanded. “What of the confectioner’s, where I have been for three years? If this lady is tired of her caprice, and dismisses me, who will give me back the confectioner’s?”

“Oh!” chimed Meriel, aghast. “And the milliner’s? And my stepmother? She bought me a place there—she will be furious. Oh!”

Excitement suddenly fled in the face of grim practicality that demanded appeasing.

The old gentleman pulled out a worn brown wallet.

“There!” He counted out two sets of bills with care. “Three hundred francs—one hundred and fifty apiece. It is more than you earn in a year, eh?”

The girls took the money, looked at it doubtfully, but pocketed it. To them it was, indeed, a breathless sum.

“As proof of my good faith,” said Monsieur Anatole Dupont impressively. “And when the experiment is finished”—he shrugged his shoulders—“whatever you shall decide. Au ’voir, my children.”

The place was thicker than ever with motors and madly dashing cabs; through the entrance of the hotel bowled luxury, intoxicating in the form of smiling, petted women. The two little *ouvrières* sighed.

“Go and live among them,” counseled the old gentleman; “turn their lives inside out, and regard them.” Then, as Meriel and Simone walked slowly away: “Poor little ones!” he muttered. “And at the end of two weeks——”

He, too, sighed, walked away, his white beard bent upon his breast.

## CHAPTER II.

The great house before which Meriel found herself had the air of just stirring from its sleep—blinking and gazing about vaguely at the day that had scarcely begun. Only three or four of the long windows stood open; a servant

was cleaning one of them, and whistling softly; a delivery cart stood outside the gates, and at a side entrance to the house a smart Buttons argued languidly with the *facteur*. Through the lofty porte-cochère one caught a glimpse of acacia trees waving drowsily; on a balcony above a maid came out and shook a frock.

Meriel sighed profoundly. Her day, since she was four, and had a step-mother, had begun at six o'clock; in the shop at eight. And here it was noon, and these people only just rousing themselves! She sighed again—more deeply. And timidly went in through the high iron grille, and to the side door.

"Well, *petite*?" inquired the Buttons loftily.

"I have a card of Madame la Comtesse—madame wishes to see me," said Meriel.

Buttons became more deferential.

"I will see if madame will receive you. Will you wait here?"

Meriel sat down on the wide bench in the hall, and waited. Indeed, she was very glad to sit down, for her knees were behaving most inadequately in the matter of supporting her. They trembled ridiculously; at the same time, she felt her heart beating wildly in her throat. What had she? Was it simply that she had never been in a great house before? True, the rugs and the great marble pillars and broad staircases overpowered her; and the sense of velvet hush throughout the place. She, who was used to shrill voices and the wrangle of the workroom, fairly *heard* the silence. Yet it was not that—entirely. It was, oh, why had she ever undertaken this mad scheme? Why had she ever listened to it? According to Simone's example, she had not sought dismissal from her *patronne*, but had merely asked for a vacation of two weeks "to go to the hospital." Grudgingly it had been allowed her. But Meriel trembled violently. Step-mother did not know. She had not dared tell her. And in consequence she had had to wander in the streets since half past seven, her regular hour for

leaving home; it was now the time that she usually took *déjeuner*—another reason for the shaking knees.

What if, after all, nothing would come of it? What if madame had forgotten all about her? If she refused to—

"Madame will see you." Buttons, returning, startled her. "Come this way."

With high-beating heart, Meriel followed him down the thick-carpeted hall, up the imposing stairs, and there was turned over to a *chic* maid, who stared at her with insolent frankness.

"Madame is very tired this morning. After the Duchesse d'Arly's ball last night—myself, I do not know why she will see you. But"—with a shrug—"it is probably a caprice. In here, then."

She took Meriel none too gently by the arm, and led her into an immense room, paneled in ivory.

"The person, Madame la Comtesse," she announced, with a sniff.

"Ah!" Some one from within the enormous canopied bed spoke wearily. "You may leave us, Josette."

Josette departed disdainfully.

"Come and sit over here," ordered the gentle, tired voice.

And Meriel, through the shadows of the half-darkened room, saw the beautiful lady of yesterday—but a hundred times more beautiful—a thousand times—as she lay back, pale, against her pillows, and with her fair hair scattered all about.

"So you are the little girl who did not want money." The lady was faintly smiling as she looked at the slight seated figure. "Why? Have you, then, everything you desire? Tell me."

"Everything I desire!" With her bitterness, Meriel found courage. "Madame, I have *nothing*—less than nothing—that I desire. I—"

"Then why did you not take what I offered you? Why did you ask for work?"

"Madame—" Meriel hesitated. Then, gazing into the lovely face and great dark eyes, something told her to tell the truth. "Madame," impulsively, "I wished to be in a beautiful place.

I wished, above all things, to live in beautiful surroundings—"

"My poor little one!" sighed the great lady. "It has ruined millions of women before you—that wish. You have parents?"

"*Hélas!* A stepmother, madame."

"Ah! And she makes you work?" glancing at the cheap little hat and black frock that were yet possessed of a certain *chic*.

"But she makes me work very hard, madame. She has apprenticed me to Suzanne Gallois, the milliner, since two years."

"Oh, you can trim hats, then! But what does she say, your stepmother, to your coming here?"

"Madame," said Meriel, blushing, "Suzanne Gallois has given me two weeks' vacation that madame may try if I am useful to her, and decide whether she wishes to keep me. Believe me, madame, I will do my best. I will—"

"Hm!" The lady was thinking. Propping her cheek on her slender hand, and sitting up in bed. "I do not know exactly what to give you to do, *petite*," she said finally. "There are many servants here—too many. They are half the time idle. But"—catching Meriel's distressed look, she smiled—"do not fret. You did me a service—the beautiful brooch that my husband gave me for a wedding gift!" Meriel imagined somehow that her voice was sad as she spoke of her husband. "And I will reward you as you asked. You like this room?"

Meriel glanced about it awesomely. At the high windows hung with heavy silk of the palest rose; at the immense ivory-tinted bed, draped with the same stuff, and flung over with a fragile lace counterpane; at the couches and arm-chairs of delicately painted white wood, some softly cushioned in damask and velours; at the dressing table and chiffoniers, gleaming with polished shell and gold-topped bottles of all sorts; at the great mirrored wardrobes, dainty screens, and velvety rugs—all of that faint rose.

"Madame," she breathed, "*c'est un*

*amour de chambre!* It is a dream of a room! To live in it!"

Madame looked at her with a faint smile.

"My dear," she said gently—and she wondered afterward what could have drawn her so personally to the little thing—"you will learn, *hélas!* All rooms are alike. All life is alike." When Meriel shook her head vigorously the smile deepened sadly. "Yes. But—disbelieve it as long as you can. And meantime"—she rang a bell—"stay in this room, and dream in it what you can. You shall take care of my lingerie—I suppose you know how to sew?—and keep things tidy here. Josette is criminally careless."

"Josette," as the trim maid reappeared, "take the little one to the house-keeper that she may give her a room, and—let me see; some uniforms, yes—plain black dresses with wide white collars and cuffs will do. And after *déjeuner* I will explain her duties to you."

"*Parfaitement*, madame." Though outwardly respectful, Josette's every sniff-onduléd hair brisled animosity to the newcomer. "Madame wishes I should attend to this before I dress her?"

"Yes, yes." The lady slipped back onto her pillows wearily. "There is plenty of time for that. Stay"—she remembered suddenly—"I do not know your name, little girl, and your age."

"I am eighteen," said the girl shyly, "and my name is Meriel—Meriel Roget."

"Meriel," murmured the lady, in her sweet minor voice; "it pleases me."

When the child had gone, she thought about her for as much as ten minutes.

Then for three days she thought of her not at all. Life for Meriel went difficultly those three days. Josette, who meted her her tasks, was scornful, and hard to please, though she herself did her work any way at all—generally by neglecting it. The other servants seemed to follow the same rule—as madame had said, there was an overhost of them. They were, to a creature,

supercilious and ill-mannered to all but their betters, toward whom they displayed by turns a cringing obsequiousness and a caustic sarcasm, which made Meriel stare. She found it very hard to obey old Monsieur Dupont's charge to avoid gossip and comment on her mistress.

"Does it not occur to you as odd," asked the parlor maid one day, as she was dusting madame's room, where Meriel sat, "that since you came you have not seen Monsieur the Count—madame's husband? Have you not thought that is strange?"

"I have not thought about it at all," said Meriel simply. "I have been very busy. I supposed Monsieur the Count was away."

"*Chut!*" The girl made a grimace. "He is always away; never is he here for more than three or four days at a time, and that at intervals of weeks. No one knows what he does or where he goes; but he cannot be burning of love for madame, *hein?*"

"Every one must love madame," Meriel returned impulsively. "She is adorable, with her big dark eyes and white skin and lovely hair."

"*La! la!* No one says she is not beautiful. But why, then, is she deserted all these whiles? And why, when Monsieur the Count *does* come, is he so ill at ease with her? Does he almost ignore her? When he is here you will see. Is it, perhaps, because she is English—and the Counts de Thierry have always married Frenchwomen? Or perhaps that, though they have been married five years—"

"I cannot listen to you any longer, Dorine." Meriel rose quickly. "I must press this satin petticoat of madame's in the drying room."

But it was not always so easy to escape the chatter she wished not to hear. And the servants, when in despair she would stop her ears, sneered at her for a little hypocrite. Moreover, she had to go home every evening at the regular hour, or her stepmother's suspicions would be aroused. It was not always practical to manage. Last night the peppery-tempered lady had given her

a smart box on the ears for being late. Meriel, who was developing a superiority of her own, stared at her disdainfully, but was furious. After the silken luxury of the great house, and madame's low voice, the squalor and strident scolding of stepmother— But, indeed, life was difficult for Meriel. Even in the dream of a room where she had longed to be.

"But one must not forget," she reminded herself always. "I am but a domestic here. If I were a great lady, as the old gentleman promised, it would all be different. Ah, how happy madame must be—how happy!"

Yet it seemed to her more than once as though madame looked sad. She came and went continuously, gliding swiftly in to change her gown, vanishing again, half a dozen times a day. Or people came to see her—hundreds of them, it seemed to Meriel. They admired her, laughed with her. Meriel, hanging over the banisters, heard them. Why was she not gay, as they were? When she was with them she was gay. But alone in the pale-rose room, she—

"Little Meriel," said she, that third day since she had noticed the child, "are you always sewing? Why do you not go out and take the air?"

"I like it better here, *merci*, madame," said Meriel contentedly. "Besides, if I did not finish this blouse Josette would be very angry."

Madame frowned.

"Josette shall not hector you," she said decidedly. "My orders are that you shall take a walk every day; you look pale."

Madame herself had dropped down onto a sofa, and closed her eyes.

"Thank you, madame. May I take madame's hat and wrap?"

"Yes, take them—or no, leave them on. I don't know—what difference does it make? Do as you please, Meriel."

So Meriel, a little wondering, took them off. When she had put them away and changed madame's shoes for a pair of satin mules, "You're a strange child," said madame, taking the small

face suddenly between her hands. "Somehow—you're a comfort to me."

Meriel beamed.

"Bring your work over by the window—or, better, no, don't sew any more. I wonder"—madame gazed at her thoughtfully—"how long you'll stay a little girl before you grow a servant? Sit here on this cushion beside me. I think," curiously, "I'll tell you a story; would you like that?"

"Oh, yes!" said Meriel rapturously.

"And it would be good for me; I *must* talk to somebody," murmured madame, twisting the jewels on her slim hands. "I'll talk to you, Meriel. You're safe. I'll tell you a story."

"Yes, madame." Meriel's upturned face was all absorption.

"Once upon a time," began the low voice slowly, "there was a girl who lived alone with her father. They were of very ancient blood, but poor—horribly poor. The mother—happy creature!—died when her daughter was born; and the child grew up under the sole care of an old woman servant who scarcely knew her alphabet. Certainly nothing besides. Such an education hardly fitted the girl—shall we call her Lorraine?—to understand and cope with the problems of life. She had, of course, instinctively the fineness, the *noblesse oblige*, of her race; but—"

Madame broke off abruptly to stare out of the window for an instant, while her brown eyes clouded. Meriel was staring at the exquisite lace of madame's robe, and wondering how a person with such things could ever be *triste*.

"Finally," madame's voice took up the thread laggingly, "the inevitable happened. The girl became eighteen—just your age, little Meriel, and with more than your simplicity. Her father called her to him one day, and told her the plans he had made for her. He was a solitary, silent man, the father—a recluse, who had few friends, and wanted no more. Between him and his daughter there existed a sort of proud sense of alliance. That was all. He told her now that he had arranged a marriage for her with the son of his old-

est friend, Richard Henri de—but what does the name matter? *Enfin*, that they were to be married, and shortly the girl would have to take her place in the great world—the world of Paris, where she would be fêted, admired, accorded a position that all would envy her."

Again madame stopped. Meriel, immersed in the story, wondered impatiently why.

"So the marriage took place," continued the low voice, with its under-threading minor, "in a very short time, for the father was ill with an incurable disease that threatened his life. The girl saw her fiancé only twice before she married him; but it was enough—to sweep her with a wild, unreasoning love for him. Understand, he was young, too—only twenty-four—and straight and tall, with blue eyes that— But he was one to make a woman love him; that is enough. As for him"—madame was pulling out the lace in the corners of her filmy handkerchief how intently!—"at any rate, he married her. They went away to Italy."

"And he was very kind to her, the husband. He made her beautiful gifts, and was very gentle in explaining to her the ways of the world they were to live in. The honeymoon passed. They went to Paris—you are interested, little Meriel?"

"But yes, madame! And had she *luxé*, this beautiful lady? Had she a room as lovely as this?"

Madame laughed uncertainly.

"She had many rooms, yes, as lovely as this. But I did not say that she was beautiful. She might have been if—but wait. A few days after their coming to Paris one of those amiable *causeuses*—an old friend of monsieur's—took her aside at a reception, and congratulated her on having won a man whom every woman in Paris had tried to capture. But with no success. 'For it came to be understood that he had no fondness for women, no passion for them; that,' said the gossip triumphantly, 'he would marry only to perpetuate the name.' Ah!" Madame's slender



hands clenched together. "She said that—yes! And," slowly, "the girl came to know that it was true. Richard was always kind to her, good; he gave her everything; he was solicitous for her health. *But he never loved that girl, nor*"—madame laughed a little hysterically—"any other woman. There was solace in that, at least. And the father died, and she was left alone with Richard. That's all of the story, except"—madame's clear cheeks flamed—"that they had no child."

"But that is not the end?" said Meriel disappointedly. "That is not the end of the story, madame. In the *Petit Journal*—"

"No," said madame curiously, "it is not the end. The story just stops. It is so in life, little Meriel; the story stops."

"But it is a *story*," murmured Meriel, vaguely unhappy; "and—"

"At any rate," said madame, jumping up almost gayly, "that is the end for this installment. And now draw my bath, Meriel, and lay out a tea gown. Some people are coming, and I declare you suit me better than Josette. Yes, yes"—madame was disrobing feverishly—"I feel better; I shall be very gay this evening."

Meriel glanced at her dubiously.

"Madame looks ill," she ventured, observing the glittering eyes, usually so soft.

"Nonsense, Meriel! I am *grande dame*—of the great world. They," with a hard little laugh, "are much too fortunate to get ill."

"Oh!" said Meriel.

Wistfully, yet—somehow, for the first time, she had doubts as to the fortune of a *grande dame*. And the pale-rose room, with its mirrors and gold-topped bottles, looked the least bit less lovely in the twilight.

### CHAPTER III.

And Simone? On Saturday at three o'clock she and Meriel met outside the office of the old gentleman, Anatole Dupont, twenty-two Rue de Provence.

"But how you have the air *tragique*!"

exclaimed Meriel. "What ails you, my Simone?" And it was true that Simone's cheeks burned, and her black eyes seemed to be fairly popping out of her head. "But you have the air *tragique*!" repeated Meriel.

"I have reason," returned Simone grimly. "Let us mount, and you shall hear."

They climbed up the steep stairs to the fourth floor, where in a tiny back room full of nothing but maps, two chairs, and a battered table, they found the old gentleman playing Canfield. A voluminous, snuff-colored robe hung in smutty yellow folds from his bent shoulders; on a chair directly opposite him sat a smutty yellow cat.

"Well, well!" The old gentleman rubbed his hands briskly. "And how do we get on, *hein*? How do we get on? Sit down, my children, and let us hear. *Pelleas*!"

The yellow cat grudgingly jumped down from his chair.

"There! And you, *p'tite*, sit here." Monsieur Dupont pushed a rickety stool toward Simone. "So! Who shall recount first?" he asked, in his cracked voice.

"Simone," said Meriel promptly. "But she has the air of excitement!"

"Listen!" Simone sat forward, fixing them with her snapping black eyes. "On Tuesday I go to that house—the *appartement* that is on madame's card—ah, but is it *chic*? A marvel, I tell you! Tapestry, and silk embroideries, and masses of flowers, orchids, roses—but madame receives me. She is drinking her chocolate in a boudoir hung in lilac and dull blue. *Chut!* I do not know if you have seen her well the other day, but she has eyes like early violets, and brown hair with red in it. She wears a peignoir of white chiffon, and the little dogs are all about; one sits in her lap. There are four—all King Charles. It is a picture. *Dame!*"

"I gape at her. Madame smiles graciously, and tells me to sit. She explains to me about the dogs—that I shall take them out morning and afternoon, two hours each time. But not too

fast. They are delicate, says madame. And her maid—a monkey named Celeste—is none too good to them. I shall also have commissions to do for madame." Simone's voice gathered intensity. "It is that—that—but you shall hear.

"For the first two days all is tranquil. I call for the dogs. I take them to the Bois; I obey instructions; all is tranquil. Both days have I seen madame—once ravishing and smiling, dressed to go out; again in a violent rage because of some gentleman who demands to see her. I will not receive him! she screams. 'I will not, do you hear? Show him the door!' Celeste, who is frightened, obeys. Tells this gentleman. But he—what does he do but walk calmly into the salon where madame is, and close the door? They have a scene of fury, *ma foi!* Celeste and I—who am waiting, trembling, for the dog madame has with her—we hear outside exclamations, cries of contempt from madame. 'And what if I do?' she says once, quite loud. 'Is it any crime to love a person because I have never happened to meet him?' 'For you it is a crime to love any one,' retorts this gentleman. Oh, but we can hear—Celeste and I. 'You, who—'

"Their voices are lowered; we hear no more. But Celeste tells me this gentleman is a great friend of madame's, who comes often, and gives her very beautiful jewels. But they have quarreled. 'One night, coming home from the——' Simone stopped, confused. 'If I told you that, you would know the name of madame,' she said. 'Enough that they quarreled, and—I forbade Celeste to tell me more—*ce monsieur* has never been here again until this time.

"After a few moments—to us it is one year—he comes out, very pale, from the salon. Celeste fetches his hat. He does not see her. Then, when the door has clicked behind him, madame calls me—but sharply. She is of a pal-lor, *mon Dieu*, but beautiful! A miracle! 'Simone,' she says slowly, closing the door, and it is here that my excitement begins, 'Simone, I am going to

trust to you a very delicate commission. I have observed you closely since you came,' says madame, 'and I think that I can trust you. Listen. I am being watched. That gentleman who was here just now—that *person*'—madame is overcome with emotion; she sits biting her lip and tearing the lovely lace of her frock into strips, all unconscious—that *person* is having me watched. He has the insolence—yes—because he saw what there was in me, that I had genius, and took me out of the poor little place in Rouen where I was, to give me education, training; but *Mère de Dieu*, madame broke off, 'have I not repaid him—a thousand times? And not with money only; with my freedom, my liberty, my heart's blood! Simone, Simone, you *must* help me!' 'But I will do all I can, madame,' I promise hastily. She looked at me. 'I believe you will,' she says. 'Then listen again.'

"In the Rue — there lives a man whom I must see. He does not live there, but he has rooms. I *must* see him,' declares madame, with desperation. 'And—nobody knows you. They do not know that you are of my household—yet; they will not watch you as they do Celeste. In the morning, before you come here, go to this address; ask to see monsieur, and tell him—tell him,' says madame, 'that I *must* see him. Make a rendezvous anywhere, any time that he shall appoint. Only tell him my name, make sure he understands, and that I am in great trouble, that I pray him to help me. Oh, he is good, and clever—I know it. Yes, he will help me. But you are not sure of finding him perhaps to-morrow; he is not at those rooms every day—oh, I can make use of detectives also!' says madame. 'He is there only sometimes—irregularly. But go, Simone—go! And bring me, at least, *some news*.'

"*Hélas!*" concluded Simone sadly. "I have been at this address yesterday—to-day—but this Monsieur X is not there. He is not there since three days, says the concierge."

Here the old gentleman interrupted.

"But why," he asked, "are you so

wrought up, so nervous? What is there in all this to——"

"What is there?" cried Simone. "What is there in being watched every time one enters or leaves a house? Oh, yes, they know me now, too. In being followed on the streets by men who disappear the moment one turns to look for them? What is there in being of the household of an adorable lady whom one is powerless to help—who is wretched, miserable; who is so in love with——"

"Ah, she is in love?" echoed Meriel eagerly.

"But have I not said? In love, and with some one she has never met! And I, who have been fiancée to a *patissier* before my father failed and lost my *dot*, to sit by and do nothing—what is there in that? Name of a name!" snapped Simone. "Are you insensible, monsieur?"

The old gentleman smiled slightly behind his long, flowing beard.

"I have been accused of it," he returned mildly. "At all events, my child, your mistress can scarcely be said to be on a bed of roses."

Simone flared instantly.

"If you please, she is Mademoiselle—ahem! She is famous, and beautiful, and fêted; but if you could see the flowers every night, and the jewels, and the——"

"Evidently she is a person of ability," said Monsieur Dupont, stroking his bald head; "the ability to be beautiful, at least."

"Ah, but *my* madame!" broke in Meriel. "You should see *her*! She is——"

"One moment! One moment, and you shall tell us. That gentleman who caused madame such rage," to Simone, "he has never returned?"

"No, monsieur. But madame lives in hourly dread; it is but two days. And madame fears every instant lest he shall intrude himself again to make another terrible scene."

"Hm! *Alors*, my child?" Monsieur Dupont turned to Meriel.

And Meriel locked her small hands in unconscious imitation of her mis-

tress, and told eagerly of the great house and haughty servants, and the gossip she had tried not to hear; and then of the pale-rose room and madame—her pretty voice tripped and tumbled over the extravagances she would say of madame—and at last of the story that madame had told her, and that in the retelling made her somewhat sad, as on the day before, faded the ardor from her voice, and finally silenced it.

Simone, too, sat depressed and spiritless after her recital. The smutty yellow cat purred stertorously, and old Monsieur Dupont tickled its ear, and looked from one to the other of the two girls with a mild speculation.

"So! It is not all so enchanting, *hein*, inside out?" he said, at length, in his cracked treble. "There are ugly seams on the other side, and splotches that come to the surface even in four days. However, I suppose you still want to go on?"

"Oh, yes!" cried Meriel.

"Oh, yes!" declared Simone.

"And you think you will be able to keep the compact—of telling no one, not even each other, or me, the names or addresses of these ladies? You think that you can undergo the two weeks of complete silence?"

"But certainly," returned Meriel and Simone stoutly. Yet they glanced at one another uncertainly. "If at the end——" ventured Meriel.

"At the end it shall be as you say—education, frocks, one hundred thousand francs apiece for *dot*; or—the milliner's and the confectioner's again."

"Oh!" laughed Meriel. "As to which it will be—but that is ridiculous, the comparison. Isn't it, Simone?"

"I don't know," said Simone thoughtfully. "There are things——"

"Exactly." Monsieur Dupont rose. "There are *things*. Well, au *voir*, my children—and you will come again on Wednesday, eh? Au *voir*—au *voir*!"

He stood in his voluminous, snuff-colored robe in the door to watch them downstairs; and Pelleas, the yellow cat, stood by him. When they had disappeared, "At any rate, he married her,"

he muttered—the words of little Meriel's story, of the beautiful great lady's story; going back to sit down before the battered table, with his head upon his hands. "But he never loved that girl, nor any other woman." The man with the white beard and long robe gave a harsh laugh. "And they had no child," he whispered. "They had no child!"

#### CHAPTER IV.

Madame la Comtesse de Thierry received; it was quite a big party, and at the last minute Meriel had been pressed into service.

"There ought to be some one to keep the teapot filled," said madame, "and I will not have that top-heavy Jacques forever at my elbow. Meriel, *ma petite*, you shall come down—you would like that?" It was singular how madame had fallen into the habit, almost wistfully, of asking the little *lingère* "You would like that?" Josette, who overheard, flounced out of the room resentfully.

"Odd it is when madame puts that little upstart over us all!" she declared in the servants' hall. "It is 'Meriel, this,' and 'Meriel, will you bring me that?' and 'Meriel, you would like—you would like!' Eh, *la, la!* What is the household coming to, I should like to know!"

It came, that evening, to the most brilliant of its season's receptions. From five until seven Madame la Comtesse, exquisite in diaphanous white and creamy pearls, sat in her great chair, and received. She would not stand—ever—she had long ago given notice; it was too fatiguing; and her innovation of the enormous, high-backed chair was complimented as original enough. "*La reine sur son dias*," as Pierre Mot, the poet, had pronounced it, gained much in dignity, and lost none of her *entourage*, through the caprice. Indeed, it permitted her the gracious liberty of offering her guests tea from the low taboret near by—an attention that tickled their sense of intimacy.

It was here, at this little *tabouret de*

*thé*, that Meriel was established—eyes wide and wondering above her deft, swift-moving hands. Heretofore she had seen the great world only over the banisters; now she was handing it tea, with shy glances of admiration; but they were ravishing, these women! With their laces and jewels, and their delicate perfumes and soft, rippling voices—delicious! And at the end of two weeks, the thought that she might, if she liked, be one of them, made Meriel almost drop a cup in her excitement. She balanced it hastily. And a beautiful lady, with Titian hair and emeralds at her throat, took it from her.

"That little maid of yours," Meriel heard her say carelessly, "how very pretty, Angèle! And her uniform is quite too becoming." Meriel's heart beat high. "Oh, by the way," went on the lady, who was, among other things, Duchesse d'Arly, "I haven't seen Richard lately."

Meriel saw madame's lovely mouth contract.

"No?" she said lightly enough. "But that is hardly odd, as he has been away."

"Oh! To Italy always, I suppose?"

"Yes—to Italy," said madame, still lightly.

"Dear me, but I should think you would begin to be jealous of her—this 'Italy'! Richard spends so very much time——"

"Dear Amélie," purred madame gently, "have you forgotten what you so sweetly told me when I came, a bride, to Paris? That Richard had never been known to love any woman? It was so friendly of you, I thought."

The duchesse laughed sharply. "But that's not saying he never will, *ma chère*. *Tout passe, tout lasse*, you know—especially in our world. And even Richard—well," with a mysterious smile, "one hears rumors."

"I suppose one does," said madame calmly. "As you say, our world seems to tire of everything except scandal. And that, if there is none, must be invented. Excuse me; I see Lady Knox coming in."

The duchesse moved away, Meriel

staring after her. But it was strange—these ladies addressing each other politely, even caressingly; yet they were surely not friends; they surely did not like each other. Meriel was positive that madame, spite of her steady smile, had been hurt; she was learning to know madame's voice and its betraying under notes. Strange! And this "Richard" they talked about—Meriel knew it to be the name of Monsieur the Count—was he indeed in Italy? Or was—

"Give Lady Knox a cup of tea, Meriel," reminded madame gently, bringing Meriel very gladly back from the gossip that flowed eternally in the servants' hall. "You see, I have a new little maid," said madame to the English lady who accepted Meriel's cup. "What do you think of her?"

The lady, who was quite an old lady, stooped down to peer keenly, embarrassingly into Meriel's face. With a little satisfied "Humph!" she straightened herself.

"You've made no mistake, my dear," she said emphatically. "It's to be trusted, which is more than any other of 'em is," she declared. "I've forty years' experience."

And Meriel beamed. Though she liked better what the duchesse had said of her—that she was pretty, and became her uniform. It meant that after a while, when she came to take her place among these people, as old Monsieur Dupont promised—

"Tea for Monsieur Chavnet, Meriel," Again madame had to remind her.

"Mais! Quelle mignonne fillette! Elle—"

"Come, Chavnet; no spoiling my little ingénue," madame recalled him imperatively. "And I have only two minutes to talk to you; Jurand is bearing down on us. Are you working at anything these days?"

"Beautiful lady," said Chavnet, sipping his tea, "I am doing a play for Marianne Doreau. It is—"

"Marianne Doreau?" interrupted madame, and Meriel listened hard; she had seen pictures of the beautiful Marianne Doreau—*l'Enchanteresse*, as they called

her, though she was said to be, opposite of every other *enchanteresse*, cold and uninterested in her conquests. "But I thought she had a new piece?" said madame. "I thought Bussy did one for her?"

"He did—he did. But"—Chavnet leaned toward her confidentially—"the lovely Marianne and Bussy are not on the best of terms just now. They are said to be in—ahem!—rather strained relations. It is the chance for your little Chavnet!" cried he gayly. "And he is making use of it, never fear! The play is called 'The Treadmill.'"

"The Treadmill? What a dreary title!" Madame gave a little shiver. "Well, success to you, Chavnet! I shall come to your *première*."

"Madame, a thousand thanks!" He passed on to make way for new people.

Meriel looked after him with no great interest. He was *bien soigné*, yes, and he had said she was pretty. But praise from men was but the usual. It was the women who counted.

The great salon grew more crowded; people arrived in an ever-thickening stream. Madame began to look weary, but only about the eyes. Her lips were always determinedly smiling, her face animated; Meriel wondered at her look of *vivacité fixe*. Then, as is so often the case, departure seemed to blow through the rooms on a gust, carrying every one with it. Adieux were said, motors were called; only a few stragglers who had come late still lingered, chatting with madame. Meriel herself, the excitement passing, began to wish she could sit down.

But madame, who was talking to a dark gentleman with fierce black mustaches and piercing, half-shut black eyes, had not yet dismissed her. She stood patiently behind madame's chair.

"*Chère comtesse*, it was something most important for which I came to-day," she heard the gentleman murmur, "most important and grave—for us both."

"For us both?" echoed madame, in surprise.

"But yes! May I not crave the liberty to remain a few moments? To



talk with you a little? Madame la Comtesse is so seldom 'at home'—so much in demand—so occupied."

He was drawing up a chair, seating himself, without so much as waiting for madame's permission. Meriel found herself disliking him heartily. He was too smooth, too quick and quiet for a man.

"You may remain, monsieur," said madame formally. This, as he had sat down, was obviously forced upon her, so to say, the last guest at that moment disappearing through the door.

"Thank you. And——" He nodded toward Meriel.

Madame stiffened.

"There is nothing you can have to say to me that my servants cannot hear, I am sure, monsieur. Meriel, you may tell Jacques to wait; but you," deliberately, "may stay here. Arrange the lights and take away the tea things."

"Yes, madame," said Meriel, mentally making a grimace at monsieur. "Who's fifty, if he's a day!" she said to herself.

"And now, monsieur?" Madame turned to him gravely.

"Madame, the affair of which I must speak with you is so delicate—so painful—I ask you to believe, madame, in advance, that I have tried every means before coming to you. I have done everything——"

"Yes, yes," said madame impatiently; "but now that you have come—what is it? I confess," with an access of dignity, "I am puzzled."

"Madame la Comtesse," speaking very fast, "it has to do with Monsieur the Count. Madame knows that all the world knows that Monsieur the Count is erratic, that——"

Madame had risen.

"Really! If you have come here to try to discuss my husband with me, monsieur, I must wish you good evening. Muriel, show monsieur——"

"No, no, do not send me away!" he broke in hurriedly, as Meriel, who had been extinguishing some of the many brilliant lights, came forward. "Have patience, madame, I beg of you. Believe me, I do not come here to gossip,

but to ask your help—your coöperation."

"My coöperation?" repeated madame. "Are you not rather impertinent, monsieur?"

"No," said he slowly, "I am not. Won't you sit down again?"

Madame hesitated.

Then "You may go on with the tea things, Meriel," she said. And Meriel disappointedly saw her sit down again. "Well?" She waited restively. "Come to the point, please, monsieur."

"Madame, I will. I am in great trouble—the most terrible trouble," bitterly, "of my life. And in it is involved Monsieur the Count, madame's husband. He—may I beg, madame, that you will not interrupt until I have finished? I assure you——"

"Go on," said madame, closing her scarlet lips tightly.

"It is this: He, the count, spends much time away from home, everybody knows; in Italy, it is supposed, where he has property. Madame does not amuse herself in Italy; she stays here. Madame," bending forward till his black eyes shot conviction into hers, "*so also does monsieur!* Here in Paris—number seventy-one Rue Adam."

"What!" Madame gasped. Then, quickly recovering herself: "What you say has no interest for me, monsieur. I do not employ spies to concern themselves with the affairs of my husband."

"Then you would do well to, madame," he retorted. "Certainly you are the only *grande dame* of Paris who does not. And it may interest you, at least, to know that your husband has rooms—but luxurious rooms!—where he goes when you think he is in Italy; that he makes rendezvous there, and that beautiful women——"

"Stop!" ordered madame. Meriel, frightened, shrank back into a corner of the great room. "That is enough. Perhaps, before I have you shown out, monsieur, you may have some explanation to make for your extraordinary conduct?"

Her voice was frigidly clear, her face absolutely colorless.

"Yes, madame, I have. A trite one,

no doubt," ironically, "but the truth. This man, your husband, has stolen from me the woman I love. The woman who——" He checked himself violently. "I will be as calm as I can, madame. But is not her maid there every day with a note? And there are flowers and beautiful gifts that she cannot explain, and—— Bah! What would you? We are not children in the cradle. It is perfectly obvious."

Madame was staring at him—staring and staring. She had forgotten to be angry—to order him out. She only sat and stared at the ugly, impassioned face, the burning, vindictive eyes. Her own eyes were hard and bright.

"How—do you know all this?" she asked faintly.

"Detectives. Since first I began to suspect, I have had M—this woman watched."

"Oh, you need not guard her name," said madame wearily. "I know. One cannot but hear gossip. How is it, though," she demanded suddenly, "that I have heard none about Richard—my husband? One's friends are only too amiable about such things, and there has been not a word—not a syllable."

"Ah, madame, he has been clever!" bitterly. "His reputation for long journeys, and then this quiet street, and the side passage to his rooms——"

"Yes? Then how did you find it out? Oh, there is some mistake—you've got the wrong man. Perhaps a striking likeness has tricked the detectives, or——" She was regaining poise. "Monsieur, our interview is at an end. I am deeply sorry I listened to you."

"No, madame, it is no mistake. I have seen Monsieur the Count leave this house, and go to the Gare de Lyons; then dismiss his own motor, and take a taxi to the Rue Adam. I have followed him myself in another cab, and—I have witnesses who have done the same. Do you wish to see them?"

"No," said madame faintly. "Please go, monsieur."

"Very well; I go. But when you come to your senses, madame la comtesse, when you think the matter over alone, and realize—realize that your

pride, and your husband's honor, and the prestige of your family name rests all with *me*—you may wish to see me again!"

He stalked out of the room, twisting his mustaches furiously.

Madame gave an unsteady little laugh.

"Imbecile! You are there, Meriel?"

"Yes, madame." Meriel came forward, frightened, from her corner. "Oh, what a horrible man!" she cried. "What a—I—— Pardon, madame!" she broke off confusedly. "*Pardon!*"

"You are right," said madame slowly; "he is horrible. And he tells me a stupid story about my husband, and tries to get me to believe—but it is too silly." She laughed again, though the ripple of it broke abruptly. "Ring for Jacques now, Meriel, and then run up and find me a peignoir. I must rest; this—this party has got on my nerves."

Indeed, she looked ill now that the very last guest had gone, and she was alone with the little maid.

"But, madame," said Meriel awesomely, "it was a *beautiful* party!"

Madame smiled at her faintly.

"You thought so? And," coming over to place a thoughtful hand under her chin, "Lady Knox said I might trust you—dear old Lady Knox! She knew my father, Meriel; she——" Madame checked herself quickly. "There, run along, *petite*, and find my peignoir."

Meriel left her, but from the hall looked back to see madame standing there, alone, in the center of the great magnificent room. How slender she was in her clinging white draperies! How proud the carriage of her golden head! And of what *luxure* was everything about her! But the room looked very big. Meriel liked it better when there were people.

And that night when, at home, step-mother slapped her for a trifling carelessness, she thought of something madame had said to her—madame lying dreamy on her *chaise-longue* before a fire that was the only other live thing in the room.

"Never love anybody, little Meriel.

It makes you believe too stupid things. It is too great agony."

Meriel thought that a strange speech—from one who must be loved as much as madame. But—it came to the little maid for the first time in her life—she had never loved or been loved by anybody; and, spite of stepmother and her ill temper, she had never known agony. Meriel that night lay in bed, eyes very wide, and thought about it.

#### CHAPTER V.

"Madame wishes to speak to you," said Josette sourly, when Meriel made her appearance next morning. "And it's a pretty pass when a lady takes to rising at eight o'clock in the morning!" she added, with a toss of her elaborate head. "If things go on like this, I'll be looking out for a new place! I'm used to serving the aristocracy."

Meriel's heart leaped within her. If Josette should seek a new place, then perhaps *she*— But what nonsense! She forgot always the wonderful dream that was to come true in two weeks—no, a week now.

She went upstairs, and, softly, into the pale-rose room.

"It is you, Meriel?" called madame impatiently. "But you were long in coming this morning! Draw the curtains aside and come here—ah, *Dieu!*" as the warm sunlight streamed in. "What a night! I could not sleep at all, and—why, what ails you, Meriel?"

"Madame looks so pale—so ill," stammered the girl, "I—"

Madame laughed shortly.

"Josette told me I looked fresh as a rose. Ah, it is easy to see you have not learned the smooth lies of the *chic* servant, little Meriel! For that reason—sit down. Listen!"

Meriel took the same low chair she had sat in a week ago, when first she came into madame's pale-rose room.

"Madame?"

"Meriel, I am horribly worried. All night I have not slept—for thinking of the story that insufferable man told me. Oh, it's absurd, I've absolutely no

reason. Richard has always been just and honorable with me—and yet—"

"Madame speaks of Monsieur the Count?" Meriel inquired timidly.

"Yes—yes, of Monsieur the Count—of my husband. You have never seen him, Meriel, but if you had, you would understand. So tall, so beautiful, so noble—in contrast with the man who came here, he— But it is just that, don't you see? He despises them! He despises all of this society on which I am dependent. And he will not remain in it. It is for that he goes away. But, though he never told me so, I have always believed he went to Italy. He has estates there, where we have spent some time, and— But he never told me. He has always said simply: 'I am going away for a little.' And I"—proudly—"would never have asked him where. Now"—madame sat up in bed, her hands pressed to her heart—"there comes this wretched story."

"But surely madame does not believe it? That gentleman," said Meriel indignantly, "was mad—outside himself—to suggest such a thing. Oh, madame, there are wicked, jealous men in this world, who do nothing but make other people's lives wretched. Has not my friend, Simone, told me of another such? She is in the service of a beautiful *artiste*."

"An *artiste*," madame repeated quickly. "But who, then—the name?"

"Madame, I do not know. Simone"—with a shade of embarrassment—"is not allowed to tell me. I know only that this lady is very unhappy, and because of a so jealous, revengeful man. She—"

"Is her name Marianne Doreau?" asked madame slowly, her eyes fixed on Meriel to catch any flicker of expression.

"Madame, I do not know," repeated the little maid simply. "But she is very beautiful and unhappy. This man persecutes her."

"Hm!" Madame lay back against her pillows and closed her eyes for a moment. Then she opened them abruptly. "Well, Meriel"—and her low voice was strained with emotion—"I have

made up my mind to fathom this story, to find out. It is weak, it is distrustful of me, even dishonorable, perhaps, but I *am* weak. And"—passionately—"I have borne enough!"

"Yes, madame." Meriel looked a little frightened.

"You will take this card, you will go to this address," said madame, speaking very rapidly, and writing something on the little tablets that were on the stand by her bed. "You will report to me who answers you. If it is a very tall man with blue eyes—But, no!"—locking her delicate hands together. "It shall not be, it cannot be. Yet, go, Meriel—go quickly—now. It is early morning still, and—do not be afraid to tell me all you see," said madame faintly. "To know—*anything*—will be better than this suspense."

"Yes, madame."

Meriel was leaving the room. Madame called her back.

"You understand, Meriel"—she looked deep into the young girl's eyes—"I am giving you this to do because you are the only one of all my servants I dare trust not to betray me. If it should get to any one's ears—if it should become common gossip—Meriel! I am trusting you."

"Madame shall find me faithful," said Meriel, her cheeks flushing.

"I am sure of it." Madame sank back on her pillows, with a sigh of exhaustion. "Now, go, my little one."

And Meriel went. When, an hour later, she came back: "Well?" asked madame feverishly. "Well? What did you find out?"

"Madame"—regretfully—"there was no one. This gentleman had not been there for almost a week, and—"

"But he had been there—sometimes! Those are the rooms—ah, *Dieu!* Go on—go on!"

"The concierge was quite cross when I asked her when she was expecting this gentleman. 'How can I tell?' she says. Oh, but she was cross, madame! 'And what with you lady's maids running here—'"

"She said that?" gasped madame. "Lady's maids"—plural, like that?"

"Yes, madame." Meriel herself was growing excited. "What with you lady's maids running here every half hour, I'll never get my work done. Be off with you!" she said. Oh, she was a horrid old woman, madame!"

But madame was not listening. She had her hand over her eyes, and was lying there in bed like one dead. Meriel watched her fearfully. At the end of five minutes, however, she sprang up.

"Bring my clothes, Meriel, and dress me," she ordered, in a light, hard voice. "And—stay! First telephone the Theater Fleury, and ask for Monsieur Bussy. Say that I will see him at eleven o'clock."

"Yes, madame." Meriel was piecing together bits of conversation she had heard yesterday at the party. "Monsieur Bussy." He was the one who—

"Are you hurrying, Meriel?"

"Yes, madame."

Before she let him into madame's sitting room at eleven, Meriel knew that Monsieur Bussy was the man whom madame had scorned yesterday, and who was in love with the beautiful Marianne Doreau, "*L'Enchanteresse*." Could it be true that Monsieur the Count also loved her—this cold beauty? But with such a wife as madame! Meriel retorted indignantly. Still that lady with the emeralds had said that "Richard" had never been known to love a woman. And "Richard" was Monsieur the Count. Did he not love, then, even madame?

Oh! Meriel shrank back into herself, horrified. For any one not to love madame! And a so noble gentleman as madame said he was. Meriel's brain revolved helplessly about it all. She was not in the room this morning for Monsieur Bussy's interview; she heard only the rumble of low voices in tense conversation, for over an hour, in the next room. Then she was summoned to show Monsieur Bussy out—suave, erect, with a small, triumphant smile on his lips to-day. Meriel hated him.

"Choissy will be here, then, to-morrow morning," he said, in parting, to

madame. "Meantime—I quite approve your plan to see for yourself. Good morning, Madame la Comtesse!" He bowed himself out.

"Hateful person!" muttered madame—in whose cheeks two red spots were burning. "Meriel, quick! I want a bath. Ah, the disgust of it! The cheap filth of their methods! But one must go on. One must go on!" repeated madame drearily.

That afternoon, when it was dusk, she took Meriel to drive with her.

"It is such a cool day, you may order the brougham, Josette," she had said.

"Perfectly, madame," had answered Josette, respectfully enough. But once outside the door, to Meriel: "A cool day, indeed! Does she think, then, that I am a babe in arms? *Chut!* She goes in a closed carriage for some intrigue. And you, little hypocrite, go with her! Ah, you're not pulling the wool over our eyes, with your innocence and your soft ways. Innocence—eh, *la! la!*" And Josette laughed disagreeably.

But little cared Meriel. She was too absorbed in affairs of breathless importance to bother these days with what the servants said. She sat in the carriage, next madame, her hands folded demurely; but through her mind raced the events of the past twenty-four hours—the party, the miserable half hour afterward, when that gentleman remained to tell his sordid story; then madame's agitation this morning, her—Meriel's—journey to the rooms in the Rue Adam, the second hateful visit of Monsieur Bussy—and, through it all, that haunting suggestion of madame's: "Never love any one, it is too much agony!"

The carriage bowled out of the Bois and down the Avenue du Bois into the brilliant Champs Elysées.

"Tell him to drive to Georges', on the boulevard—I wish to do a commission," said madame. "And"—in a low voice—"to pass through the Rue Adam."

Meriel gave the order.

"You will tell me when we are coming to number seventy-one," said ma-

dame, still in that low voice, and drawing her veil closer about her face.

It was almost dark now; lights were beginning to flash up over the city. But the Rue Adam was not yet lit.

It was an unimportant little street, off the Boulevard Haussmann—only a block long, and with few shops.

"The rest are offices, Bussy says," murmured madame. "Watch closely, Meriel."

"It is there, madame! The door with the high grating. And—*grand ciel!*"

Meriel stopped short. At that door a lady, tall and thickly veiled, was standing—hesitating.

Madame drew in her breath.

"You say no one else lives there, Meriel?" haltingly.

"Ah!" Madame moved close to the window. The lady in the door turned swiftly, at the sound of wheels. Through their veils, the eyes of the two women met. "Ah!" breathed madame again slowly. "It is Marianne Doreau, yes! Who else has that figure? That turn of the head so brusquely graceful? She is famous for it!"—bitterly—"Marianne Doreau!"

The carriage rolled on. Madame shrank down, silent, in her corner. She seemed utterly crushed; speechless. As for Meriel—she thought of old Monsieur Dupont's words: "There are seams, and ugly splotches, inside out." And she wanted to weep. Why was life, this luxurious life that she had wanted, so disappointingly hard? Did she envy madame now, as she had envied the lady in white, whose brooch was dangling?

"Meriel," cried madame suddenly, "do not pity me, do you hear? Do not dare to pity me! I—"

Meriel stared. In her hour of suffering, then, a great lady had not even pity? Would not have it?

"No, madame," she returned obediently, "certainly not."

"I shall overcome this thing," said madame shortly.

And there was no more conversation between them till they reached home. Meriel did the commission at

Georges', and gave madame back the change. That was all.

But that night when Meriel was leaving, the great lady said good night, then looked at her—lip trembling, for a moment—and, with a cry, threw her arms about the little maid, and clung to her.

"Oh, Meriel—Meriel!" she cried, in a passion of tears, "I'm miserable! I love my husband—I adore him! And—you're the only one who knows my sorrow! Stay with me, little Meriel—stay with me to-night!"

And Meriel, weeping, too, stayed. She slept on a couch at the foot of madame's bed, which evoked sardonic remarks from Josette on "madame's new lap dog." But Meriel did not even hear. In seven short days she was face to face with more sorrow than she had seen in all her eighteen years, whose griefs had been confined to a lost holiday or an unusually hard beating from stepmother. But what were blows? One forgot them, and went to sleep; whereas this suffering of madame's—

It was a dragging, endless night. In the middle of it, Meriel wondered, all at once, how Simone was getting on—and her poor lady. She would ask Simone if she had ever heard of Marianne Doreau, at that lady's house. They were to meet at Monsieur Dupont's to-morrow.

But when to-morrow came Meriel did not keep the rendezvous. Madame was too pale, and needed her. And there was a sandy-haired young man who looked like a *commerçant*, who came and sat with madame a long time—almost two hours, in the little sitting room. Meriel knew, instinctively, that he came from Monsieur Bussy—that he was "Choissy."

When he had left, madame called Meriel to her, and gazed at her thoughtfully.

"They have beaten me," she said, with a little spent sigh. "They have convinced me, Meriel—they and my own eyes. And now"—paler than ever—"I must talk with Richard. I must! Do you understand, Meriel? And you—rising swiftly—"must go and stay

in his rooms until he comes, and tell him. It is the only way we shall ever get hold of him. You must go directly after *déjeuner*. I will write a note!"

"Yes, madame," Meriel said nervously. "But—but I shall not have to speak to monsieur—I shall not have to urge him—"

The responsibility of the affair overwhelmed her; she was trembling.

"No, no, *ma petite*, have no fear!" madame reassured her. "You will have only to give him this note"—proudly. "There will be no need to urge. Richard is a gentleman—whatever else he may be; he will recognize and respond to the right of my request. He will come! Only—this time tell me nothing, Meriel! You understand? Whatever you may see, whatever may occur, tell me nothing! I am through now with spying," said madame unsteadily. "I am intent only on saving our dignity."

"Yes, madame."

Meriel watched her pitifully. But they had to think of a great many things—grand people! When their hearts were breaking, and their minds full of every sort of bitterness, they had to think also of their dignity! Meriel drew a deep sigh. She was glad she had not had to talk to Monsieur Dupont that morning. It was true that the old man had *some* reason in what he said of the lives of rich people. But—Meriel took the note from madame, gazing at madame's blouse; it was a miracle of frail lace and intricate embroidery—a bit of froth that must have cost five hundred francs; to be the possessor of such loveliness!

Meriel sighed again. Madame was looking at her, with lips that quivered.

"Do not forget," she said, "that I shall be waiting here, counting the minutes until you return. Yet—do not return, whatever happens, until you see him. And now, go—go very quickly."

Meriel went, leaving her standing there in the pale-rose room, biting her lip valiantly, and staring straight ahead of her, out of dark eyes that were brimming over. Looking back, Meriel did not think anything about the room.



She went down and out of the great, silent house, and through the streets quickly toward the Rue Adam. In the Place de la Concorde, she met Simone—also in a cab, also nervous and agitated.

"But what have you?" asked Meriel, stopping an instant to speak with her. "Did you go to the Rue Provence this morning?"

"No," said Simone briefly. "Did you?"

"No. Madame was too miserable. And yours?"

"Wretched." Matter-of-fact Simone looked about to shed tears. "*Mère de Dieu!* What women must bear—*luxure* or no *luxure!*"

"It is true," said Meriel, clasping tighter her note. "I must hurry—I have a commission."

"And I—I shall see you on Saturday at Monsieur Dupont's, I suppose?"

"Yes—when the two weeks will be up! *Au 'voir!*"

"*Au 'voir!*"

The two cabs separated. Meriel's, turning into the boulevard, was held up by the traffic Simone's just escaped. A horse had fallen down; Meriel was delayed a full ten minutes in going on from the Rue Royale.

When she reached the Rue Adam, "Yes, he is in," snapped the concierge, "but another young person is before you. Have the goodness to wait in monsieur's hall. When he is free, I shall ask if he will see you."

Meriel sat down in the hall. Through a door that was slightly open she saw a tall man with dark hair—standing up. Her heart beat to suffocation. This, then, at last, was Monsieur the Count!

## CHAPTER VI.

Meriel could not see who was in the room with him; indeed, she caught only a glimpse of Monsieur the Count—who was evidently pacing up and down. The sound of his measured steps came through the unlatched door. Meriel looked about her; the hall in which she sat was full of light, and a

collection of beautiful etchings hung thickly about it. Also in a case were many guns of all descriptions—their handles curiously wrought with jewels. The cold bright steel sent a shiver through her. At least, there was nothing here to suggest a woman, she thought, a moment later.

"But how does your mistress think I can help her?" came through the open door at that very instant. "What in the world can I possibly do?"

Meriel, on some unaccountable impulse, stopped her ears. Madame had said she was not here to spy, and—when she took her fingers out, monsieur was saying in a grave, agreeable voice:

"No, that I cannot do. You must understand I go nowhere in Paris. I have these rooms that I may shut myself up in them; and I go nowhere. How your lady ever found out that I came here I do not know; but tell her—if you say she is being watched—tell her so am I. A rendezvous would be fatal—for both of us. I can help her much better by remaining perfectly quietly here."

Meriel was leaning forward, mesmerized by the grave, mellow voice that had somehow an odd note of familiarity. Ah, but madame was right! He was beautiful, and tall, and with such a voice. In spite of anything, a man to love.

Inside the room, a feminine voice murmured something indistinctly.

"Ah!" from monsieur. "Yes, I know him. He is *canaille!* But"—a bitter note crept into the deep tones—"accepted, fêted even, in that society that is the ideal of the world! *Soit!* That is why I have left it." One could hear monsieur walking again.

Meriel went restlessly to the window and looked out. How long would they be? How long before the low murmuring voice she could not—did not—want to hear, would cease besieging monsieur? She thought of madame at home, counting the minutes; and she wanted to fly into that room, to press the note into monsieur's hand, and wildly to beg for an answer. Poor Meriel! In the service of grand people, she had caught grand people's malady—nerves.

She forced herself to sit down again, to remain quiet.

Inside, monsieur was saying:

"No, you do not know my name—I pass here as Monsieur de Bey. Your mistress knows that also, or how did you gain entrance here? But, tell me"—curiously—"what can she, who has admirers, friends by the hundred who would go through torture to aid her—what can she find to seek out in an unknown, an obscure Monsieur de Bey? You say she saw me at a café—well, there are scores of men to be seen in cafés, and the one I frequent is quiet enough. What, indeed, could the beautiful Marianne Doreau have been doing there?"

Meriel, in her corner, started. Marianne Doreau! So it was true, then! She strained her ears to listen, this time—involuntarily. But the answering feminine voice was always low, indistinct; evidently under tremendous control.

"She thought I looked 'good,'" monsieur then repeated slowly; "she thought that out of all the men she had ever seen I looked good! Great heavens! Little girl," he said abruptly—Meriel supposed he was talking to the "young person" in there with him—"you had better go home to your mistress, and tell her I am not good. I am only wise—or trying hard to learn to be. Tell her there is no goodness in the world, no badness; tell her there is no happiness—such as she seeks—nor any unhappiness—such as she imagines she has. There is only wisdom and ignorance. And the life we make depends on our choice between these two. Marianne Doreau is clever, she has imagination; she will see what I mean—perhaps follow it. Go back and tell her, little girl."

But he was talking strangely, Monsieur the Count! No happiness, no goodness or badness; only—Sh! What was he saying now?

"She—loves me? But, impossible! Why, surely, if she has been at all in society, she knows. But you are mad, *ma petite!*" He broke off abruptly. "You do not know what you are say-

ing. Mademoiselle Doreau sent you here to arrange something, and you dare not return without effecting it; therefore you fabricate, you say whatever comes first into your head. But it is useless. You gain nothing—and now, go."

Meriel rose quickly at last. She took an impatient step forward. But—with in the room some one rose, too, heavily. And the voice, that came distinctly enough now:

"I must go back and tell madame, then, that I have failed?"

Meriel suddenly clapped her hand over her mouth. *Simone!*

Simone, who came to plead for her mistress—whose mistress was Marianne Doreau, *l'Enchanteresse*, the woman whom she—Meriel—and madame had seen—oh! She uncovered her mouth, suffocated.

"It is nothing to you if a so exquisite a lady weeps her heart out because," Simone was saying in that dull, distinct voice, "you will not help her. You will not deliver her from this man who makes her life a misery."

"But, my dear child——"

"It is nothing to you that you are the only one she dares trust, the only man she's sure is not in his pay. You——"

"But she doesn't know me!" cut in the count impatiently. "It's only a fancy she has that I can——"

Meriel was unconsciously stealing forward, knees shaking, cheeks white with excitement.

"I say it's all a hoax," finished monsieur tersely. "It looks very much like a crafty game to trap me out of the seclusion I must continually fight to keep. Well, it won't work! Do you hear, little cat's-paw? It won't work!"

"*Dame!*" Oh, Meriel well knew that tone of Simone's when she was angry. "It seems then that madame *was* mistaken! That you are not the goodness, the kindness she imagined, but—a scoffer! Skeptical and cruel like the rest of them. It seems——"

Meriel's hand was on the doorknob. At the cold contact she shivered; hesitated consciously a minute. In that minute, Simone's voice changed to a note of

yearning that pierced even Meriel's resentment.

"Ah, monsieur, monsieur! Have pity; help her—my poor, beautiful lady! If you knew how she is unhappy! See her, monsieur! Do but see her, and—her great, lovely blue eyes!—you will love her. You——"

The door from the hall flew open. Meriel darted into the room, snatched Simone by the arm, crying:

"How dare you! Simone Legrand, how dare you!"

Instantly Simone's yearning mounted to fury.

"So you're here, Meriel Roget! And how dare I what, miss? What affair is it of yours?"

Monsieur stepped back to look at them—with an enigmatic glance. The two girls glared at each other.

"How dare you try to win the husband of my madame?" demanded Meriel slowly. "That is what I want you to answer, Simone."

"The—the husband!" stammered Simone, turning almost as pale as Meriel. "The—what are you saying, Meriel?"

Meriel dropped her arm, drew herself to the limit of her slim height.

"That gentleman," said she clearly, regarding Monsieur the Count straight out of her accusing eyes, "is the husband of the lady whom I serve, whom I have told you of. He——"

"But I do not believe it!" declared Simone, rallying. "A husband—spend his time alone in rooms where there is no sign of a woman's having been—live by himself, unknown, as Monsieur de B—whom even the concierge—— No, no, *ma petite!*" with a pitying laugh, "your lady has deceived you! Out of envy and jealousy——"

"Be silent!" Meriel flung at her—violently, for such a little thing. "Don't you dare insult my lady with such words that she has never known! Is it envy, jealousy, then, to wish to see your own husband? To send to him with a note?" Mutely she held the crumpled envelope to monsieur. "Ask him. Ask him whether or no it is the writing of *madame sa femme*; ask him, Simone!"

Monsieur looked at Simone directly.

"It is," he said, without waiting to be asked.

"It is?" Simone repeated slowly. Then, suddenly, she burst into a ringing laugh. "Eh, *la! la!* And so you thought to fool me—you almost did fool me, with your game of the writing!"

Meriel stared. Simone had always been cleverer than she. But what could she mean?

"So, Monsieur X!" went on Simone scornfully. "You tried to teach me that I must play the cat's-paw, whether I would or not! You threw dust in my eyes beautifully, with your talk of seclusion, and the service you would do my mistress by remaining quietly here! And then you and your little pupil, here—*ma foi*, but she has learned rapidly, the ingénue!—you thought to cap the deception altogether, to be rid of me once and for all, by——"

"Simone!" Meriel interrupted, in a voice that made Simone look up, startled, out of her fury. "I do not know what you are talking about," said Meriel, "but you must stop it. I shall make you stop it. By telling you the truth."

Meriel had lost sight of monsieur and his grave attention; had forgotten the compact with Monsieur Dupont, and its provisions. Meriel, at that moment, remembered only madame—standing there in her room alone, her great dark eyes brimming over.

"Simone," said Meriel, scarlet flooding her pale cheeks, "this gentleman is Monsieur le Comte de Thierry. And the lady whom I serve is Madame le Comtesse."

Simone's lips were dry.

"Is it true?" she asked unevenly.

"It is true," said Monsieur de Bey, with a slight sigh. "Er—won't you sit down, mesdemoiselles?"

The two girls—Simone dazedly, Meriel exhaustedly—sat down. Meriel noticed for the first time the room in which they were; that it was big, but seemed small—so crowded it was with apparatus of many kinds, and strange maps and instruments. An odd salon,

truly, thought the little maid wearily. But monsieur was speaking.

"I suppose," he said, in his curiously familiar voice, "you think I owe you an explanation. As a matter of fact, I don't. Outside that you are of the poorest *bourgeoisie* and I am aristocrat—a social lie which I do not believe—no human being owes another an explanation for doing that which seems good to him. But I choose, voluntarily, to make you one. It is true"—he looked from one to the other of them thoughtfully—"I am Richard Henri de Noailles Bercy, Comte de Thierry. It may surprise you to know that I much prefer to be Monsieur de Bey. I was born the one, and have made myself the other; my preference proves itself."

The two girls were sitting forward, eyes glued to his face.

"Here in this room," he said, "I have my *jeux d'hazard*; my experiments that are my hobbies as well; my colored photography, my new barometer, my system of electric heating. On the walls"—nodding at the one opposite—"are my women, beautiful and silent, who do not fill my rooms with chatter, or the soot of the latest scandal. In the hall are my pet collections—ungaped at by a mob of monocles; and about me"—he drew a deep breath—"is peace. Tranquillity—or was," with a little laugh, "until you ladies began bothering me. Monsieur the Count is in Italy; Monsieur X is in contentment!"

"And," put in Meriel, cheeks burning, "Madame la Comtesse?"

"Surely Madame la Comtesse is happy," said monsieur lightly. "She has her wonderful house, her servants, her motor cars, her jewels, her superb toilets—all the fripperies a woman wants, and for which she—" He broke off abruptly. "Surely Madame la Comtesse has all that she wants," he finished, in another voice.

Simone looked up at him, for the last time, skeptically. "Would monsieur be so kind—as to—may I see monsieur's card?" she begged shamefacedly. "It is only to—"

He handed one to her, from his silver case.

"Monsieur le Comte de Thierry, 235 Avenue du Bois de Boulogne. Pardon, monsieur, but if I might—I assure monsieur—"

"Take it. The secret's up now. And," lightly, "when Mademoiselle Doreau learns that her paragon is only 'the mad Comte Richard,' the laughing-stock of the society he shuns, I am sure she will only ask you to smile with her over being temporarily as mad as he! Show her the card, and"—he scribbled something across the back of it—"that! 'Monsieur de Bey'—his dying signature! And now, my children," with a relieved laugh, "be off with you! I want this last day in—"

"But what," asked Meriel again, "of Madame la Comtesse?"

"Oh, yes, yes, of course! Say that I will come—naturally! To-morrow, at half past eleven. She asks me to name my own time; but if that should be inconvenient—"

"Monsieur," said little Meriel sadly, "I think there is no time that would be inconvenient for madame to see monsieur!"

"Er—what? How's that? You think—"

"Pardon, monsieur, if I go," put in Simone humbly. "*Bonjour, Monsieur le Comte—je demande pardon, monsieur!*"

"Simone," begged Meriel, "wait for me. I am coming at once. I only want to tell monsieur—"

"I will wait outside," said Simone.

"Now, then!" When the door had closed upon her, monsieur turned to her impatiently. "You said—"

"I said I thought that no time would be inconvenient for madame to see monsieur," repeated Meriel, clasping her slim hands. "Monsieur thinks then that madame does not bore herself, also, with this society?" she added—speaking from she knew not where.

"But she was crazy for it!" blurted monsieur. "She married to get it. She is—"

"Oh!" Meriel regarded him indignantly. "Who has told you such things?"

"Well, Amélie d'Arly, and—" De

Thierry caught himself. "I'm sure I don't know why I'm talking all this to you," he muttered, looking away from the little maid. "After all, until we went to Paris, I was willing enough to believe her ingenuous."

"Ah!" The significance of that story madame had told her rushed suddenly upon Meriel, who was all at once learning to make four of the two and two she just began to understand. "Until you went to Paris, yes! During the honeymoon in Italy, yes! I know. I know that story of the young girl and her father who was old and sick, monsieur! I know of the so beautiful young man to whom her father gave her—who was kind to her, good—until they went to Paris, and then——"

"Yes!" repeated monsieur tensely. "And then——"

"Monsieur," Meriel straightened primly. "I forget myself. I must return to madame, who waits monsieur's answer."

De Thierry shrugged.

"Oh, very well. And if you wish to tell madame—since you seem to be so completely in her confidence—that I am quite aware that her detectives have been watching me, have spied me out, in my hard-earned privacy, do so by all means. Tell her you met here the maid of Marianne Doreau—whom you are so innocently surprised to find your friend! Tell her——"

"Monsieur," said the little maid, with dignity. "I have no need to tell madame anything about Mademoiselle Doreau or—— When a lady is seen at the door of your apartment, monsieur," broke off Meriel, cheeks aflame for madame and the cruel blow of yesterday evening, "when madame, in passing, sees with her own eyes——"

"You are wrong," said monsieur, roused at last from irony to something more personal. "Mademoiselle Doreau, or any other woman, has never visited my *appartement*. I came here to escape women, not to——"

For the second time that morning the door opened swiftly. Some one swept through it, stood there, breathless. A thing of tawny hair and stormy eyes,

she was; a creature of long, sinuous lines and brusque, lithe movement: a woman!

"*Alors!*" She gave a dangerously soft laugh. "You come here to escape us, eh, monsieur? 'Not to—be caught!'"

Meriel drew in her breath. It was Marianne Doreau.

## CHAPTER VII.

Monsieur laughed, too—disagreeably.

"Since you have succeeded so well, madame, in your catching, may I not offer you a chair in which to triumph?" he asked, with excessive politeness.

"Thanks."

Mademoiselle Doreau, with a restless smile, sat down. Meriel, with a long, reproachful glance at monsieur, was about to slip from the room; when, "Wait!" he stopped her. "Where are you going?"

"Monsieur, I was going to find Simone."

"Useless," put in mademoiselle, pulling off her long gloves with one smooth jerk. "I sent her home—*petite sotte!* Oh, she tried to make excuses, but was she not here? Sitting calmly in the hall, while I at home—eh, *mon Dieu!* But you have made me suffer, you!" Her splendid eyes blazed at De Thierry.

Monsieur looked calmly over her head at Meriel.

"I desire you to remain, if you please," he said. "As you already know so much, and—I believe in the value of a witness. Sit there."

He indicated a chair in a far corner of the room. Meriel unwillingly took it.

"Evidently, then," said De Thierry, "your maid did not tell you——"

"She told me nothing," broke in Mademoiselle Doreau impatiently. "What could she? There was nothing to tell."

"Oh!"

"Certainly not! I sent her here to—but perhaps the little *vaurien* told you that much."

"She did. She told me also the extraordinary fact that you thought I was good."

"Well?" Yes, Meriel could see the charm of that soft brusqueness.

"It impressed me as droll, that is all; that a lady of mademoiselle's unquestionable talents of mind"—monsieur paused to make her a truly wonderful bow—"should have sought to make rendezvous with a *good man*."

"Stupid!" Mademoiselle stamped her foot. "You know it was only to—to—"

"To deliver mademoiselle from the toils of that *scelerate*, Bussy? Yes, but afterward? Here in Paris one does not deliver beautiful ladies without assuming, ah—certain responsibilities. And I—"

"Yes, you?" eagerly.

"They are responsibilities, mademoiselle," urbanely, "that I have never known. I fear myself unequal to them."

"You are of a beautiful modesty," said mademoiselle dryly—though her eyes were darting after his every flicker of expression.

"I am only," returned monsieur humbly, "aware of my limitations."

"When I saw you in the café," said she, "I was not as aware of them as I am now."

"That," said he, with another bow, "is easily understood. Even Marianne Doreau cannot tell all men at a glance. Especially such a freak as the—"

"No, but at the second glance—at the nearer glance"—she rose, to move over to him with one swift, lithe step—"she can tell"—a long, vibrant hand going out to rest on his arm—"a good deal more!"

Meriel, in her corner, wanted to cry out. But monsieur, standing motionless, only looked at the actress with a certain tolerant amusement in his cool eyes; and—was it also?—a certain pity.

"What can you tell, then?" he said attentively.

"Either that you are a diabolically clever man, or—a *stone*!" she flung out stormily, her hand falling away.

"Put it at the latter, a stone," drawled monsieur. "In that you will have the concurrence of other people; and, as

you said, I am a modest man. For the diabolically clever, I could hardly—"

"Oh, you make one wild! You make one *mad*!" She dropped down into her chair again. "And, for you, that detestable Bussy—" Two great tears fell from the glittering blue eyes.

"Listen, mademoiselle!"—De Thierry sat down near her—"there is no earthly reason why you and I should not be friends. Why I should not help you. Wait!" as she bent toward him eagerly. "If you had listened to Simone, you would have understood better. But—what I did not tell your maid—I have interests that are Bussy's interests—the Theater Fleury, for example."

Mademoiselle started.

"Oh, he does not know it," proceeded De Thierry. "An agent of mine arranged the affair when Bussy was at low water—"

"I remember, yes," interrupted mademoiselle absorbedly; "two years ago."

"Two years ago. Young Chavnet interested me in it."

"Why, Chavnet is doing a play for me!"

"You cannot do better than accept it. He, now, is diabolically clever. Well, as I was saying, it will be a very simple matter for me to inform Bussy that unless he ceases his persecution of you, and becomes merely your manager, your employee— He is a good manager?"

"Oh, yes," said mademoiselle unwillingly. "As a manager he's excellent. But—"

"Very well, then. I say to Bussy, either you agree to become, and remain, merely Mademoiselle Doreau's manager, or—*ecco!* you go out. Chavnet comes in; the Theater Fleury is reorganized!"

"But you are wonderful!" cried mademoiselle, clapping her hands.

"And you," said monsieur, smiling, "are like an April day! *Alors!* It is understood? And you will not make yourself wretched over this *canaille*, Bussy, any longer? Remember—"

"Oh!" Mademoiselle clasped her long hands. "I remember. I remember, monsieur, how Bussy found me—playing in a cheap little *variété* in



Rouen. Why he ever stumbled in there, between trains, I cannot imagine—it was a pitiful place. How he became enthusiastic for me, came to see me, brought me to Paris! And then, the training—the preparation—the clothes! But I remember! And finally the *succès fou*.

"Only, I remember also," said Marianne Doreau, looking hard into the eyes of the man she found good, "what every other actress of Paris remembers, if she has a success: that it was all, every *brava*, every flower, every jewel, paid for—and with interest to cover twenty such successes! The Bussys of this world, monsieur, are not in it as philanthropists."

"I believe it," said De Thierry tersely.

"And whatever debt I owed that creature," said mademoiselle, unconscious of Meriel's wide, wondering eyes upon her, "I paid as it came due. Now—I'm through with him! Do you understand?" she repeated passionately. "I'm through with him!"

"Yes—yes," said monsieur, in his grave voice, that soothed. "And, with that, the worst of our troubles is over, eh? For the rest——"

Mademoiselle's passion died, as he had said, like the gust of an April day—only to pass into another.

"For the rest"—she spread her long hands, palms downward—"they say I am cold, untouched by the love that is given me. Should you think so?"

Monsieur smiled slightly.

"Well, I should hardly say that," he said.

She crimsoned like a girl. She was very lovely so.

"Let us forget that—that stupidity," she begged, a new expression coming over her variable face. "You have promised to be friends with me——" The expression was wistfulness.

Monsieur's face also softened, which was odd in a "stone." "I am friends with you," he said, "though you do not even know my name."

"What does that matter? I know you, which is vastly more important."

He looked at her with new interest.

"Where did you get so unfeminine a standpoint?"

"I got it," said she slowly, "where I got my so-called coldness, and my passion for outdoors and all my other unfemininity: from a grinning fate which has no compassion for me."

"That you do not know," he said, watching her. "And is the success such dead fruit?"

"Oh, no; but it palls. And—in it there is no peace. You see," with a rueful smile, "I am only three parts tempest. The fourth part craves peace, and love, and domesticity, and all the feminine fetishes there are!" She blazed suddenly. "Oh, why, why, you who are clever, can't I get them?"

Meriel wished wearily that they would stop talking. She was on edge to get home to madame; and faint with hunger. It must be one o'clock. But she was no longer angry with mademoiselle, nor resented her. She saw that mademoiselle, too, was different from when she came into the room an hour ago.

"Why can't I get them?" she repeated, fixing monsieur with pleading eyes.

For some reason he avoided meeting them.

"I only know," he said, looking beyond her at his maps and his apparatus, "that there are those of us who don't."

Mademoiselle, following him, became suddenly aware of the room.

"Why, this—it's a laboratory!" she exclaimed.

He smiled faintly.

"It has been—of a sort. To-day it ceases to be."

"But why? Why? Oh, I think to make experiments, to——"

"That is just it. This was an experiment, the whole thing; an experiment that failed. To-morrow, I am giving it up."

Meriel listened now. It was more interesting.

Mademoiselle had paled a little. "You—you are giving it up? But where, then—where do you go?" she stammered.

"I am going," said De Thierry, "home."

"Ah!" The actress drew in her breath. "So you, then, have one!"

"I have one, yes."

"And a wife?"

"Yes."

"And children?" A sharp note had crept into mademoiselle's voice.

"Children—no," he said, with curious quietness.

"Ah!" she drew a great sigh. "You have no children!"

"No. You sound"—his tone changed to savagery—"as though you were glad of it."

"And what if I am?" she returned deliberately. "What if I am!"

Their eyes met for a full minute challengingly—hers defending while confessing, his accusing while comprehending. They did know each other, oddly enough, in that short hour.

Then, with a little laugh, mademoiselle broke the tension.

"*Eh bien*, you have been nice to me, and I am going! *La petite*, over there, looks half dead with fatigue, poor little one! And—you had really not so much need of her, you know."

De Thierry looked at her.

"She is my wife's maid," he said simply.

"Oh!" The slow color flooded Mademoiselle Doreau's cheeks. "Well"—she rose—"there is nothing she can carry to madame of which I am ashamed. And you?"

De Thierry shook his head.

"If you please, mademoiselle," ventured Meriel, with dignity, "I am not here to carry tales to madame. Monsieur insisted that I stay."

"So he did," remembered mademoiselle, with another little laugh, "so he did, *petite*. And—perhaps it was as well. Tell me," turning to monsieur, "what is she like, your wife? That is a feminine enough question, is it not?"

Monsieur, who also had risen, said:

"She is exquisite. But I know not the first thing about her. Meriel—that is your name, eh, *petite*?—can tell you better."

But mademoiselle gave no heed to Meriel.

"She is exquisite—but you know not the first thing about her. You are a stone! Monsieur," asked mademoiselle, very low, "does she love you?"

Meriel held her breath.

"I have never thought about it," came monsieur's answer. "But——"

"But you are going back to her tomorrow? Think about it, monsieur," said the other woman slowly. "Think about it!"

"And now," with a brilliant smile, "I'm really going. You will let the little one find me a cab, and you will—but you are kind!—see Bussy, and——"

"Certainly, yes," said monsieur, opening the door for her. "I will see Bussy and——"

"You will, my friend!" confirmed a strident voice from the hall. "You will see him—*now!*"

Before them, in the doorway, appeared Bussy.

Meriel, at the sound of his harsh voice, shook in her shoes; shrank back behind mademoiselle. But mademoiselle merely shrugged. And De Thierry lit a cigarette, which he took out of a heavily marked case that, instead of replacing in his pocket, he laid on the nearest table.

"You permit me, mademoiselle?" striking a match. "Monsieur Bussy, are you coming in?"

"I am," exploded Monsieur Bussy, striding into the room. "And a pretty chance it was, that let me arrive in nick of time."

"Oh!" Mademoiselle shrugged again. "I suppose your agents informed you."

"They did, *ma chère*! What a wonderful reason you have!" Bussy glared at her, while possessing himself of a chair with its back to Meriel. She had slipped back into her corner. He did not see her. "But actually to find you here!—to catch you before you were gone—it was too good luck!"

"But then, Bussy," drawled monsieur, "you have good luck. Two years ago, for example, when the Theater Fleury was——"

"What do you know about the Thea-

ter Fleury—two years ago?" demanded Bussy thickly.

"Just what you do, Monsieur le Propriétaire. You are in better circumstances now, eh? Thanks to Mademoiselle Doreau."

"Thanks to Mademoiselle Doreau! And what of Mademoiselle Doreau's circumstances? What of her circumstances, *hein?*"

"Excellent. Thanks again to her great talents, and the ability of her manager. By the way, Bussy, she's keeping you on as manager, if you behave yourself."

Bussy gave a vile smile.

"And you," he insinuated, glancing from one to the other of them, "she is evidently keeping you on as—"

"Don't put yourself out to finish," interrupted De Thierry evenly. "I have never seen mademoiselle before to-day, and"—he did not look at mademoiselle—"I shall not see her after to-day—off the stage."

"Pouf!" sneered Bussy. "Very pretty, very pretty, but—"

"Come, Bussy," mademoiselle put in, in an odd light voice, "it's no use being ugly. He has you, and—"

"He has me, has he?" almost shouted Bussy. "I'd have you know, my fine lady, I have *him*! You say all the time you don't know who he is—well I know. I know his name, and I can drag it down—"

"His name," said mademoiselle, whose eyes had been fixed on the little table near by, "is Richard Comte de Thierry. And you can drag it—*nowhere*, Bussy! He owns the Theater Fleury."

"He—he—what do you say, *misérable?*" stuttered Bussy. "Owns the Theater Fleury? But you are mad—raving!"

"No," said mademoiselle. "I have been; but not now. He owns the Theater Fleury. And the contract with you—my contract that is up next week—will not be renewed unless—"

"Unless you agree to release Mademoiselle Doreau from any personal obligations by which you choose to con-

sider her bound," finished De Thierry. "To leave her absolutely free."

"So!" blurted the manager furiously. "between you, you invent this plot of owning the theater; and by it you think to terrify me into—and at the same time pose as the nine virtues! You two innocent hypocrites! And you never saw each other before to-day—oh, no, no! And—"

"Your agents should be able to give you satisfaction on that," said De Thierry, regarding him steadily, "and my concierge. And," nodding toward Meriel, "this little girl in the corner."

Bussy jumped up, to stare.

"It is true, monsieur," began Meriel timidly. "Monsieur the Count and mademoiselle never—"

"Name of a dog!" muttered Bussy. "The maid of madame! I—at all events, you have arranged things very cleverly," he told the two bitterly. "If indeed you can prove that the Theater Fleury is in the possession of—"

De Thierry walked over to a desk, and hunted among some papers.

"Here it is," he said, after a moment: "Deeded to M. R. de Noailles de Bercy, per Durant. Monsieur de Bercy is myself. Well, do you accept a new contract as manager, on the conditions I offer?"

Bussy ground his heel into the rug.

"You leave me no choice!" he returned, between his teeth.

"No—there aren't many managerial positions like the Fleury on the market just now," said De Thierry carelessly. "Well, my man will be round with the papers to-morrow. And for Mademoiselle Doreau. Oh, by the way, I understand Chavnet's doing her a new piece?"

"Yes," said Bussy savagely.

"Um—put it on. He's clever, is Chavnet. Put it on."

Bussy bowed, and stalked from the room, as fast as he could go.

Mademoiselle Doreau came and extended both her hands to De Thierry.

"Thank you," she said simply. "And—I understand about after to-day. It is to be only on the stage. Good-by, monsieur!"

He took her hands. And held them for an instant.

"Thank you," he returned, his eyes very steadily in hers. "Good-by!"

She stood a moment, then—with a little rush—was gone.

"And now," begged Meriel, "may I not please go back to madame, monsieur?"

"Why—of course," said monsieur absently. "I forgot all about her. Go, child—go!"

### CHAPTER VIII.

Madame sat by the window that looked down upon the street. That was all the leafy avenue was to her to-day—a street. By which Meriel would return some time. Madame pushed the hair back from her forehead wearily. It was two o'clock. Her hands fell back into her lap, inert. Meriel, coming in, found her so. There was no fury of impatience from madame; only a tragedy of resignation.

Still she looked up with a trace of suspense, when the little maid came in.

"Well—Meriel? You saw him? He said——"

"Madame, I saw him. He is coming. To-morrow at eleven o'clock."

The three sentences fell from Meriel's mouth as from the mouth of a marionette. Then she quietly fainted—at madame's feet.

"But the child has had no luncheon, no," she heard madame saying, as she came back to consciousness. "Quick, Josette! Some brandy, and then food—she must be starving."

Josette muttered something very like "Well, let her starve!" and departed.

Meriel sat up.

"I was so stupidly weak," she apologized.

Madame patted her hand—Meriel was lying on the couch in the pale-rose room.

"You were extraordinarily strong, little girl," she said unevenly. "When you are better, you shall tell me. For the present it is enough to know that he will come—Richard!"

"But he will come, madame," murmured Meriel.

Before Josette returned with the food, she was drowsy; by the end of the meal, overcome with sleepiness.

"But never have I seen such actions!" Josette shook her angrily by the shoulder. "Wake up, little *sotte*! Can you not hear madame is speaking to you?"

Madame pushed Josette aside, and, herself, drew a covering over the little maid.

"Let her rest," she said, in a voice that held perhaps some of that sweetness that she would have given Richard's children. "I can speak with her later."

"Oh, very well, madame!" flashed Josette, with the inevitable toss of the head. "Very well, of course! Madame permits that I give notice, however? I cannot remain in the service of ladies who wait upon their domestics! And madame not out to one party in the last two days! I have my reputation, madame. I must ask leave to give notice."

Madame glanced at the sleeping Meriel. And a smile broke over her tired face.

"Take a month's wages, and go now," she told Josette serenely. "I will instruct the housekeeper."

Josette flounced from the room.

"And it's easy to see who you all will have over you!" she announced in the servants' hall. "That snip, Meriel! Ladies do take the strangest fads!"

All afternoon, madame sat there beside Meriel, and into the early evening. To the Duchesse d'Arly and Chavnet, who called, she was not at home. And when finally Meriel opened her eyes, it was to meet the wistful gaze of madame's—waiting. The pale-rose room was dim with twilight.

"Oh, madame, I am so sorry! I slept so long, and——" She started to jump up confusedly.

But madame pushed her back upon the couch.

"For to-day you are not my maid," she said sweetly. "You are—you are going to tell me, you know."

"Yes." Meriel, in the half light, hesitated. "Madame," she said quickly, "I

have only to tell you this, that she—Mademoiselle Doreau—had never been to monsieur's rooms—yesterday, or—or any other time. She had only, like madame, gone past. And—Monsieur the Count will come, madame, to-morrow—for good.”

Madame gave a sharp little cry:

“For good? You say to-morrow he will come for good? Meriel, do not tease me! Tell me——”

“Madame, he will come to-morrow for good,” repeated the little maid convincingly. “He is giving up those rooms in the Rue Adam.”

“Ah, *Dieu!*” Madame’s convulsive sigh filled the shadows. “He is coming back—for good!”

“Yes, madame. It was only,” said Meriel timidly, “that he so hated this society, this——”

“Yes, yes, I know. He always hated it. But I—what else had I?” passionately. “I was a young girl, I had lived all my life in retirement, with a father whom I never saw, and an old servant. What did I know? What had I of discrimination? And he—Richard—taught me only up to the point of our coming here, where I needed teaching. He—but what else was there, Meriel?”

“Madame,” said Meriel, looking unflinchingly into madame’s eyes, “there was nothing.”

“Nothing! But you stayed away for hours—three hours by this clock! And—ah, but I understand! I told you, no matter what you saw, to tell me nothing. So now——”

“Madame,” interrupted Meriel, “it is not what you told me—and I stayed so long because there were other persons ahead of me to see monsieur—it is the truth, that I saw nothing.”

The something stubborn that made her reiterate and stand firm in this one lie of hers to madame, she could not have told. But it was there, inexorable.

Madame drew another great sigh.

“I believe you,” she said slowly.

And when, next day, Monsieur the Count was announced with a flourish by Jacques, madame, with unreserved contrition, went forward to meet him.

“Richard,” she murmured, as the

door behind him closed, “Richard, you must forgive me. I spied upon you. But—I was so horribly lonely!”

He took her hands, and kissed them gravely.

“My dear,” he said, “I understand. And I think we both have cause to ask forgiveness. That little maid of yours—Meriel—she told you?”

“She told me simply that you had a laboratory where you worked”—madame, in her humility, evaded his eyes—“that it was because you hated so our world.”

“Nothing else?”

“No. She said that there was nothing else. Poor little Meriel! For a moment I disbelieved her.”

“And then?”

“Then? Why, of course,” said madame proudly, “I took her word. She has never deceived me, and she has served me faithfully.”

They sat down.

“Yes,” said De Thierry deliberately, “she has served you faithfully. I suppose you are keeping her on?”

“Oh, yes! Josette has left me. And the child has a stepmother who is only too glad to get rid of her.”

“Hm!”

But De Thierry’s mind had left Meriel. And fastened on that speech of Marianne Doreau’s: “Think of it, monsieur. When you are with her again, *think of it!*” He gazed at madame. She was in white, with her beautiful fair hair rippling above it; and she flushed, under his gaze, like a very young girl.

“You are young, Angèle,” he remembered gently.

“Twenty-three,” she said, with a little smile.

“But it is very young! Too young to——” He checked himself abruptly. “I have been thinking,” he said, “that we might get away——”

“Yes, yes!” she assented eagerly.

“To new places—America, perhaps—where we can breathe a bit, and—get to know each other.”

“Yes,” she murmured, with a quick breath.

"If it would not bore you too much to leave Paris?"

"Oh, no! Nothing bores me," with sudden exuberance, "except Paris."

"Very well, then—shall we say Monday? I have one or two matters to complete, and then——"

"Monday!" she agreed, with a radiant smile. "Oh, Richard, I—Richard," she broke off, rising to move over to him, "it is all right between us? You do forgive me for having spied on you?"

"My dear"—he smiled at her almost whimsically out of his very blue eyes—"if I had not at the same time been spying on you, how should I have known you were spying on me? It is the pitiful pastime of our world. That is why I purpose exchanging our world. But first—I have one or two matters——"

On Saturday, when Simone and Meriel met at the foot of Monsieur Dupont's stairs, they kissed each other silently. Then they cried a little.

"Oh, Simone, it was terrible!" wept Meriel. "For me to have spoken to you so!"

"You were quite right," contended Simone stoutly. "*Chut*, my little one! If you had not spoken like that, I would have despised you—afterward, when I knew. Shall we go up?"

"Yes. And that poor Mademoiselle Doreau," Meriel continued, as they mounted the stairs, "how does she?"

"But she is happy as the day is long," returned Simone, a little defiantly. "I do not know what that monsieur of yours said to her, but——"

"I did not understand," said Meriel, "it was grand people's talk."

They knocked at the battered door of Monsieur Dupont's room. The old man in his smutty yellow robe came to open it. The smutty yellow cat sat on the second chair, as before, and had to be told to get down off it, before the two girls could sit.

"Well?" said the old gentleman—his voice sounded more cracked than ever—"and what have we to say to-day? You were not here on Wednesday, either of you?"

"No," said Simone.

"No," echoed Meriel.

They looked at each other.

"We were too busy," they said together. Then laughed nervously:

"Well, who shall tell first?"

"Monsieur," said Simone, "it is become only one story."

"How's that?" The old man stroked his long beard. "Only one story? What do you mean, then? You have told each other?"

Simone was silent. Little Meriel threw back her head.

"I have told, yes, monsieur! It is all I have to report," she said.

"But she was right," pleaded Simone, with a new softness. "It was to put things right, monsieur, that she told—me."

"Yes?" The old man sat a little forward.

"Yes. You see, they—our two ladies—it was the *same gentleman* they loved. But he—loved neither of them."

"You are sure?"

"Yes. For he left his wife, and went off for weeks at a time, by himself, in those rooms in the Rue Adam. Oh, he is a selfish gentleman!" declared Simone.

"I see."

"And the other—for my poor mistress, he had not even heard of her. That is, I mean off the stage. They say that he has never loved a woman. How do you find that?"

"I believe there are such," mumbled old Monsieur Dupont indistinctly. Pel-leas was rubbing up against his legs.

"And he is the Comte de Thierry! *Figurez-vous ça!*" concluded Simone triumphantly. "But—somehow, he made happy my poor mistress. Though she is very quiet."

"Ah! He saw her, then?"

"Monsieur, she went to his rooms," deprecatingly.

"And now he has those rooms no longer," Meriel spoke for the first time, with pride. "He has come back to madame. They are going away together."

"Humph!" The old gentleman was evidently turning over these details in his mind. "So you"—to Meriel—"told her," nodding at Simone, "because her



mistress was trying to lay hold of the husband of yours?"

"Yes, monsieur. Oh, but," cried Meriel, "she did not know he was a husband. They neither of them knew, monsieur!"

The old gentleman stroked his beard.

"And you forgot all about the compact? It was nothing to you?"

"Monsieur," said Meriel, "I thought only of madame. You are right, it was nothing to me." She gave a profound sigh.

"But just for that reason do not cut her off from your promise, monsieur," begged Simone. "Do not! Listen! I who have not forfeited my chance, will give it to her—yes, Meriel! From the first it was you who wanted the *luxe* and——"

"I do not want it now," said Meriel slowly, though her eyes shone at Simone. "Thank you, my Simone!"

"And you," said the old gentleman to Simone, "you do not want it either?"

"No, monsieur." Simone looked at him directly. "Do you know why? I do not like the men of that world. They break women's hearts. No, monsieur, I want only my *dot*, and to marry the *patissier*."

Monsieur Dupont opened the table drawer and drew forth a check book.

"And you, Meriel?" he asked kindly.

"Monsieur, I want—nothing." Meriel's sensitive little face, on which suffering had left its imprint, these two weeks, was illumined—beautiful. "Ma-

dame wishes me to go with her," simply. "I am very happy!"

The old gentleman rose, to show them out.

"It has not been all sadness, then—inside out?" he questioned, half wistfully. "You do not regret?"

"No," said Simone. "I have learned something about men."

"No," said Meriel, a smile on her lips. "I am to go with madame."

"But you," Simone accused him suddenly, "you knew all the time it was like this—that those two ladies——"

"You selected for yourselves," the old gentleman reminded. "I knew only that it is all 'like this'—life. Good-by, my children."

"Good-by." They looked back at him curiously.

He was left alone, in his smutty yellow robe, with the smutty yellow cat. He closed the door, and stood against it for a moment, thinking.

"The men of that world—they break women's hearts.' And the women?" he wondered.

His face softened. He took off the voluminous yellow robe and laid it on the table beside the check book of Anatole Dupont—known only to the Cr dit Lyonnais. Then he took off the long beard and the white wig with its bald crown. And he stood, tall and very straight; and something crept into the blue eyes of the Count de Thierry that had been absent from them for a long while: Hope.



## NOVEMBER

NOVEMBER'S not a month to make ecstatic

The most enthusiastic lover known,

Its political excesses are erratic,

And the weather is depressing in its tone;

It's a weary, dreary month of little merit,

And the meanest things they say of it are true;

Yet I find that quite contentedly I bear it

If I spend the major part of it with *you*!

BERTON BRALEY.

# THE GREEN BOTTLE

By

## MAY FUTRELLE

**F**RANKLY I had made up my mind to marry for money—and the man I was going to marry knew it—because I was so tired of getting on with nothing a year, wearing Cousin Mary's cast-off gowns—even if she did live two thousand miles away, and the gowns were hardly mussed when they came to me—tired of living with not a roof over mumsey and me except when Fred and Caroline went to Palm Beach. But a millionaire! And to have that millionaire love me; to have him Billy—well, I haven't ceased yet to wonder at the goodness of God.

I was not sure that mumsey was going to look at it that way, so somehow I put off telling her, and packed her off to an old friend who wanted her company for a month. She needed a change after her illness, and a month would give me a chance to gather courage.

The Wards have been trotting in our set so long, accepted and labeled, that some things should have been forgotten; but there were some things mumsey never would forget—some things she must remember, especially when the question was marriage. I knew she would bring up, and expatiate upon, that old subject of Billy's great-grandfather having peddled matches for a living when mine was the blue-blooded governor of the State; I knew how she would look at me in her dear, patient, resigned way, and say: "Oh, Kit!"

Now, I couldn't have any one, even

my own mother, think that Billy wasn't the most perfect creature on the face of this earth. Mumsey believed in the divine right of kings, and all that sort of thing. Perhaps her point of view was right, but I couldn't bring myself to see that it mattered what Billy's great-grandfather did for a living so long as it was honest. Why, I'd peddle matches myself, this minute, if it would help prove my love for Billy—but mumsey wasn't going to look at the matter in that highly romantic light.

I consoled myself with the thought that perhaps the money would in time make her feel resigned to the situation, for she's had an awful struggle ever since my father died; and one simply *has* to love the things that money can buy. Surely the thought of a home, comforts—nay, luxuries—would bury that match business so deep it never, never could be resurrected. Way down in my heart I regretted the money. I wanted only Billy with our love for each other, and his splendid ambition. I wanted him to need me; I wanted to have to plan and encourage. I wanted to live down that awful resolution I had made about marrying for money.

It began to haunt me—that resolution. Every time I saw Billy I asked him one awfully important question: "Do you think I am marrying you for your money?" The answer was always the same: "No," which he said instantly; and I knew he had not stopped to consider, or think it over, or anything like that, especially when he began to fudge,

and answered "No" when I had only reached "think." One day I had an inspiration. I flew to the telephone, and when he answered I flung this at him:

"Let's give away your money!"

"Oh, let's!" he replied, and tried to kiss me over the telephone; then he murmured: "Kit, darling!" in the tone that always gets my heart pounding.

"Then you never, never could think I married you for your money," I rushed on as soon as ever I could. "Billy, dearest, are you really willing?"

"Perfectly," he answered.

I said an awful lot of extravagant things which tempted him to repeat "perfectly," and we lost quite five minutes before we could get back to the important part of the conversation.

"Then it's settled?" I asked finally.

"Quite settled," he replied. "When shall I send it up?"

"Oh, you're not to give it to me!" I gasped. "But give it *away*—get rid of it!"

"All right; I'll begin with a jeweler. I saw a necklace——"

I moaned a little.

"Won't you be serious?" I begged.

"Yes, dear. Kit, I love you."

My heart began pounding again, and I kissed my ring with tears in my eyes, because I loved him, and—oh, I could have been wildly happy if it hadn't looked as if I were going to marry him for his money.

"Not that way, dear," I said; "but—get rid of it."

"I've been talking to an automobile man. I'd like to smash convention, and send you up a car."

"Oh, please, please don't!" I entreated.

How I blessed the convention that protected me from such a calamity. Great heavens! What would I do with a car? Me, with not even a roof over my head except when Fred and Caroline were at Palm Beach!

"A runabout, Kit—one you could drive yourself."

"Then you won't give the money away?" I interrupted.

"Oh, sure! I'll bring you the necklace to-night."

I banged the receiver on the hook, and just sat down and cried. And that necklace was the beginning of all the trouble.

I'm just sick and tired of dinner parties. I've done every dinner party of any consequence for five years, and it has just occurred to me that they are exceedingly stupid things. I'm sure the only reason I ever went at all was the necessity of the dinner itself; then I had to make myself indispensable on account of the need of my next dinner, and the next, and so on.

Of course, not by any chance did my hostess ever think of putting me next to Billy, either to right or left, but stuck him way off down at the other end of the table, where I couldn't even see him without making myself conspicuous. It seemed, too, as if the dinners were twice as long as they once were; that they would never end; that the man next to me always was everything I most disliked in a man; that the ride back home with Billy grew shorter each time. Society is a bore, anyway!

Billy brought me the necklace. Nestling against its black velvet cushion, it was the most exquisite thing I have ever seen. It was a rope of diamonds, the clasp seemingly as if one had merely looped the strand, leaving two frazzled ends hanging, the frazzled ends being just so many little diamond strings. Surely there was not another like it in all the world. Suddenly I threw my arms around Billy's neck.

"Billy, dearest, you don't think I'm marrying you for your money?" I demanded.

"Kit, we won't talk about the money any more, if you please," he replied. "Just be a good girl, and promise to marry me very soon."

My arms tightened.

"I love you," I whispered.

"Do you promise?"

I promised.

"Very soon?"

"Very soon," I agreed.

Gracious! It would have to be very soon, because I had even ceased to win at auction, my only source of revenue,

for always thinking of him instead of the cards.

He fastened the necklace, kissed it, which made it doubly valuable, then I stood off at a little distance for him to see the effect.

"Am I too conspicuous?" I asked. "You know it isn't proper for me to accept such an extravagant gift—yet."

"It's nobody's business but yours and mine."

"And mumsey's," I reminded him. "You see, we—the Callaways—always have been so dreadfully correct, and mumsey has such old-fashioned ideas about girls and what they can accept. I think the limit is flowers."

"Don't tell her."

"Billy! That's subterfuge."

"Only a technical evasion," he smiled. I shook my head. "We, the new rich, don't have to bother our heads with such things," he went on.

I flew into his arms, and held up a reproving finger.

"Don't dare call yourself names!" I exclaimed. "And what is subterfuge, after all the things I have been guilty of all these years—me, a social parasite? I think I may accept the necklace."

I wore it. What business had such old-fashioned ideas existing, anyhow? Some one was sure to think it was paste, or borrowed, so what did it matter?

The night Billy brought me the necklace Mrs. Van Der Greave had discovered a perfectly authentic little French count to give a dinner for, and get excited about, and give a zip to an otherwise unimportant season. She had decided that I was to be the chosen one to sit at the other side of the count, because of our mutual blue blood and impoverished pocketbooks, I guess, while all the time I was wishing some of the girls who wanted that coveted position so badly could have it. Nobility is a silly thing, anyhow.

Did you ever dislike a man for no reason on earth except just the feeling you dislike him, and that's all there was to it? That's exactly how I felt about Count Rouessel. He was good-looking enough—too good-looking, if I had been asked to express an opinion; his man-

ners were elegant, and, to me, tiresome; such acme of perfection is death to conversation. He spoke English with an accent that made all the girls within sound of his voice—except myself—go quite mad about him. He did have gorgeous eyes, but he had a way of looking so searchingly at one I could not rid myself of the notion he was always measuring the strength of an adversary. Perhaps it was a way he had acquired of bluffing his creditors.

He devoted the first five minutes of the dinner to his hostess; he devoted the next fifteen to me. Poor chap! How could he know I hadn't a penny to my name? He had no reason to believe my beautiful necklace was either paste or borrowed. In fact, it rather amused me that once he, after a most elaborate apology, commented on the beauty of it.

The dinner was, perhaps, half over when a most peculiar thing happened. I was feeling perfectly well—I don't believe I ever felt better—when Count Rouessel, having finished explaining a French *bon mot* to Mrs. Van Der Greave, turned to me.

"Are you not ill, mademoiselle?" he exclaimed.

I think I was smiling, but I felt my mouth begin to drop open with astonishment.

"You are most pale, mademoiselle," he went on, alarmed. "*Oui, oui, oui, mais oui?*"

I remembered to close my mouth, and tried to raise a hand to my brow. I did feel faint, the table and the lights began to whirl, my hand fell back listlessly into my lap. My throat felt tight.

"Will you accept zis, mademoiselle?" Count Rouessel asked.

He gave me a small green bottle, which, of course, I knew must contain some kind of smelling salts. I took it gratefully, withdrew the heavy glass stopper, and inhaled the contents.

"Ah, you are feeling better, *n'est ce pas?*"

I managed to smile at him.

"Thank you so much," I murmured.

I turned to Bobby Van Der Greave, who had taken me in.

"Do I look ill?" I asked. "I feel rather queer."

He started to get to his feet, but I pulled him back.

"Don't make a scene, Bobby," I implored. "Count Rouessel has given me some smelling salts. I feel better now."

Bobby assured me that my color was coming back. His eyes happened to fall upon my necklace; I could just feel his sudden interest in those jewels.

"That's a beauty necklace, Kit," he remarked. "New?"

"Oh, quite," I answered flippantly. "Does it look real?"

"I beg your pardon," he said, confused, as the red surged into his face.

"Don't bother," I smiled; and, to give him a chance to get rid of the awful-mistake look, I turned to give the bottle to the count.

"Will you do me the honor to retain it?" Count Rouessel requested. "You are not fully recovered, mademoiselle, *n'est ce pas?*"

I retained the bottle. Later on I slipped it in the lace of my gown, and forgot it completely until I was at home. It might have occurred to me to wonder about that sudden indisposition of mine, but it didn't. I didn't even think of mentioning it to Billy.

That night I planned a hiding place for the necklace; something of its tremendous actual value came to me. The bottle I left upon the dressing table, little dreaming what an important part it was going to play in the drama about to develop.

Next day while I was on my way to a bridge game a woman in the car fainted. I had the little bottle of smelling salts in my bag. It helped revive the fainting woman. Without actually remembering it was not my own, I thrust the bottle upon her as I reached my corner. I hadn't the slightest idea who she was; I only knew she wore a brown dress. The incident was so trivial that five minutes later I had forgotten it completely.

I don't know much about continental customs, but I think it's rather unusual for a count—French or otherwise—to

call informally at ten in the morning on a young woman he had met only once. I couldn't believe it was quite true, but there was his card; I read the name; it was plain enough; and Martha said he was waiting in the reception room. I powdered my nose hurriedly, and went in.

Count Rouessel was most polite, most formal—too formal for such an informal visit—and most charming, especially when he spoke of how quickly he had fallen into informal American ways. It didn't take long to disabuse my mind entirely of whatever silly idea I might have had that I—myself, me—had inspired the visit. He had come for the smelling salts.

"I am most unusual, mademoiselle," he said; "but the vinaigrette had most great associations viz my family. As you say, one heirloom. Will you do me the honor to return to me the vinaigrette, mademoiselle?"

And I didn't have it! I had given it to the woman in the car. I didn't know who she was, or where she was now. I tried to speak, to tell him that I had thrust his heirloom upon an utter stranger; but the words refused to come. I only made some sort of a sound in my throat.

"You are ill, mademoiselle?" he exclaimed.

I found my voice at last.

"That little green bottle an heirloom?" was what I said. "Well, I'm awfully sorry to have to say so, but I—I haven't the bottle."

"Comment?" he almost shrieked.

He understood me clearly enough. And it was such a silly little bottle, too.

"I gave to you the bottle, mademoiselle, but yes?" he demanded.

"Oh, yes, you gave me the bottle," I admitted. "But I gave it away."

"Comment?" he shouted at me again. I didn't bother to repeat it; what I said was plain enough.

"You have joke with me, mademoiselle, *oui, oui, mais oui?*" His English was getting worse in his excitement.

"Oh, there's no joke about it," I assured him, and told him about the woman in the car.

"*Oui, oui, oui!*" he sputtered. "But you know her, mademoiselle, but yes?"

"No, I don't. I haven't the slightest idea who she is."

It was a dreadful scene. The count paced the floor excitedly, shouting "*Sapristi!*" and a lot of French I didn't understand; and I was on the verge of tears, and didn't dare cry, because I'd spoil my nose; and—oh, it was perfectly terrible. The only thing I could do was to promise to try to get it back; how, I knew not except to call up Billy and ask him to help me. Great Lord! How I prayed that Count Rouessel would go, and let me get to the telephone.

All things must come to an end. He did go, not believing a single syllable of the car story; and why he thought I wanted to keep the silly little bottle was more than I could see. I flew to the telephone the moment the door closed upon him. I called Billy. I told him the awful story, and he laughed!

I'm not sure how I got through the morning, but the afternoon I spent in the street cars, in the shops, anywhere, everywhere, seeking a woman in a brown dress. I went home at dark, exhausted, without result. I don't think Billy realized how serious the thing was until he saw me. Of course, he came blazing through with the sensible thing—an advertisement. How I waited, and prayed, and hoped all that next day! I didn't dare go out, for fear the woman in the brown dress would appear with the bottle. I fairly hung upon the telephone. Once I thought of breaking an engagement for the evening to play bridge; Billy had some kind of a lawyer's affair on, anyhow, so I'd just stay home and cry it out. Then it came to me that the state of my finances forbade such a thing; I had to go; I had to make an effort to win. I went. Fickle fate smiled upon me. I won.

I felt there was something wrong even before I opened the door of the flat. The reception room—everywhere—was one mad jumble. Thieves! Panic-stricken, I thought of my necklace. I fairly flew to its hiding place. It was gone!

I'm sure I should have been glad to die. I sat down in the middle of that disordered flat, and waited for Martha to come. But I could not stand inaction. I set to work to get some order out of the chaos, every now and then going back to where I had hidden the necklace, in desperate hope that I had overlooked it. But gone it was—entirely gone.

I tried to form some idea as to what I should do. Inform the police? Telephone for Billy? How could I tell Billy? He'd be sure to think I had been careless. Great Lord! Suppose he should think, knowing my financial condition, that—my heart stood still at the very thought—I had pawned it!

As I was replacing some garments pulled pell-mell from a chiffonier, my eye caught the gleam of something on the floor. I stooped and picked it up. It was a curiously shaped locket.

The next day Billy had to go out of town. What a blessed relief it was, having him away until I could get some trace of my necklace. The count, and his bottle, and the woman who had it, were entirely lost sight of. Finally I made up my mind to inform the police, and give them the locket I had found. I dreaded the notoriety of the affair; but, to my astonishment, nothing came out in the newspapers. And I made the silliest resolution of my life—I resolved that Billy should never know.

Suspense is a dreadful thing. I grew haggard in a day. Of course, I couldn't expect the police to find thieves in a minute, but the thought haunted me that they would never find them, that even so my beautiful necklace might be forever lost to me. Once during the day I happened to look out my bedroom window; two men were below, looking up; twice during the day detectives in plain clothes came and inspected the flat.

Toward night the uncanniness of the affair began to get on my nerves. I had a dinner party on at the Hawtreys'; I had to go, and, in her frightened condition, I could not leave Martha alone in the house. We securely locked and bolted every door and window, and I



took her with me. For the second time, with the eyes of the police upon the house, some one entered, and once again left behind a sadly disordered flat. But before I was to know of it another scene in the drama that had resolved into howling melodrama was destined to be played at the *Hawtreys'* dinner party.

Did you ever stop to think how easy it is to get into society? Especially in a place that is neither too large nor too small, more especially a place which had a reputation for blue blood and exclusiveness? Take my word for it, that's the easiest kind. The recipe is simple. It merely requires one introduction, a mixture of good sense and tact, sprinkled freely with an expensive home, five automobiles, a goodly number of servants, and the whole highly spiced with good American dollars.

Of course, first catch your introduction. But even that is simple. There's the Cocktail—Club—Combination, the Club—Poker—Variation, the Loser—at—Auction, the Be-nice-to-so-and-so-for-business-reasons, and so on. I think Mr. *Hawtreys* met the *Collis* through the C. C. C.'s, although Mrs. *Hawtreys* gave her word for it that they brought credentials—or whatever it is one brings—from the very best people in Boston, and knew all the smart people at Nice, and every place else in Europe where there are smart people. But frankly I did not like Mr. and Mrs. *Collis*.

I dreaded, too, to meet Count *Rouessel* until I had that hateful little green bottle to return to him. I only hoped he wouldn't sputter when he saw me, because how was I to know a little smelling-salts bottle was an heirloom? I was purposely late, so I wouldn't have to listen to any dressing-room jabs about my looks, or answer any questions about the necklace I had worn—whether it was paste, or borrowed, or anything about anything. I knew if any hint of the green bottle was afloat I'd never get to the table without a red nose.

It was after the soup when I began to take note of the people in my vicinity.

I already knew that Billy was not there, and that the count was at the other end of the table. Something in the merry way a woman near me was laughing caused me to look in her direction. It was Mrs. *Collis*. Then suddenly the world stood still! About her snow-white neck was a rope of diamonds, the clasp seemingly as if one had merely looped the strand, leaving two frazzled ends hanging, the frazzled ends being just so many little diamond strings.

I sat quite still, and I was quite cool and calculating. I even remember a daffydil Bobby Van Der Greave was telling me across the table. I did not bother my head with why she should wear a stolen necklace in plain sight of everybody of any consequence in town; I only knew that if there was any accident of the necklace having fallen into her hands we would thrash that out afterward. I knew one thing—knew it plainly and calmly, and with a deadly certainty—that Mrs. *Collis* was going to hand the necklace over to me after the dinner was at an end, or I should take it!

I was not at all excited when the signal came. I even spoke to Mrs. *Collis* casually as I asked if I could see her alone in a little room off the conservatory which I knew would be deserted. She looked a bit astonished—well, naturally—but she came.

I didn't waste time with preliminaries. I knew what I wanted, and I proceeded to get it.

"Mrs. *Collis*, I'll trouble you to return my necklace, if you please," I said, rather sweetly, I thought, considering the circumstances.

Mrs. *Collis* shot one glance at the door, and another at me. Perhaps she was wondering just how she would fare with me in a hand-to-hand fight.

"I don't understand you," she replied, "fright or astonishment punctuating every word.

"Perhaps not," I condescended. "But the necklace you are wearing was stolen from me two nights ago. I don't know how it came into your possession, but I'll trouble you to give it to me."

She opened her lips, but no words came. One hand flew to the necklace, while her eyes once more sought the doorway.

"I think I'm stronger than you," I said again, very sweetly. "I shall dislike to have to take it."

Again her lips parted, but no words came.

"It will naturally cause a scene," I went on, in conversational tone; "and, I'm very much afraid, will prove to your discredit. May I trouble you again?"

After a moment of hesitation, she reached up and fumbled with the catch; then her hands fell limply to her sides.

"It has a peculiar fastening," I said. "Will you allow me?" I unclasped the necklace, wrapped it in my handkerchief, and slipped it into my bosom. "I thank you very much," I told her, most courteously. "Lovely weather, don't you think?"

I stood aside to allow her to pass. Later I heard some one inquiring for her.

"She had a miserable headache," Mrs. Hawtrey was explaining, "and has gone."

Headache? I should think she would have had!

I didn't bother to find another hiding place for the necklace when I reached home. I switched on all the lights, and sat the whole blessed night—or what was left of it—with my back against the wall, so no one could come up behind me and take my treasured possession without an awful lot of racket. As soon as I decently could, I called up the Wards to find out if Billy had returned, for I had changed my mind about he was never to know. In fact, I was sure that the sooner we found out Mrs. Collis' connection with my stolen necklace the better off society would be.

Billy was there.

"What's wrong?" he asked.

I laughed suddenly. I was holding tightly to that precious necklace as I answered:

"Nothing's wrong. Everything's most awfully right now."

"Now?" he repeated. "Then something has been wrong?"

"Yes-s," I admitted. "I'll tell you when you come."

I could hear the receiver bang at the other end, and I went to powder my nose. I knew he was coming in a hurry.

It's just awful to have so many things to tell, all of them sort of fireworks, and some of them strange and uncanny, and not seeming to have any connection or any reason. I waited with the necklace in my hand, forming all sorts of beginnings and dramatic sentences; but what I said when he burst in upon me was:

"Well, there it is!"

If he hadn't been a lawyer, accustomed to worming facts out of people, and very patient, I don't suppose he would have found out what did happen. Although I told him the story as clearly as I knew it.

"Great Scott!" he ejaculated, when it was finished. "Let me think."

He was in the middle of thinking when Martha brought me a card. The name was "Peter Kearney."

"I don't know any Peter Kearney," I remarked, passing the card to Billy.

"He's a private detective," Billy told me. "He may have some trace of the thieves."

Mr. Peter Kearney stated his case. He was a private detective in the employ of Mr. Collis. He had come to ask for the return of Mrs. Collis' necklace, which I had taken from her by force.

"Mrs. Collis' necklace?" I inquired sweetly, and looked at Billy. The necklace—my necklace—was in plain view on the table.

"You are mistaken about the necklace being Mrs. Collis'," Billy said. "It belongs to Miss Callaway."

"She'll have to prove it," Kearney replied.

"That's easy," Billy returned cheerfully. "I gave it to her."

"You'll have to prove it," Kearney said.

"I can do that in five minutes at Bright's, where I bought it."

"Oh, all right," Kearney agreed. "But Mrs. Collis can prove that the

necklace is hers, purchased abroad, and duty paid at customs."

Billy reached for the necklace.

"We'll see," he said. "Come along with me, Kearney."

I waited for developments. The telephone bell rang finally; I was to come to Billy's office. I started to walk to keep awake, and I've often thought what an awful thing it would have been if I had gone in a taxi, or on the car, and missed the woman in the brown dress.

I was almost to the office when there came a scurrying along the crowded sidewalk, and there, grasping my sleeve, a little disheveled and travel-stained, was the woman in the brown dress.

"You are Miss Callaway?" she asked. "I want to return your smelling salts." And she fished that precious little green bottle from her grip. "I've been away, and only just now on the train saw your advertisement," she rushed on. "I'm ever so much obliged."

I held on to her with one hand, while I firmly grasped the little green bottle in the other. I felt I might need her to prove things.

"Will you give me your name?" I asked.

"I am Mrs. Hawtrey's masseur," she informed me, and gave me her card. "Mrs. Van Der Greave can also recommend me. May I hope to have your patronage?"

I think I said yes; I'm not sure. I only knew that she passed on, smiling, leaving me with the bottle of smelling salts, and that a moment later I was almost running to Billy's office.

I was quite breathless as I burst past office boys, past underclerks, and into Billy's own especial presence.

"I've got the bottle!" I exclaimed.

I thrust it upon him, and sank exhausted into a chair. He eyed the little bottle lying in his palm, and burst out laughing.

"Well, I'll be hanged!" he said. "That's a ridiculous thing to cause so much trouble."

"It's an heirloom," I reminded him.

"Piffle!" he exclaimed.

Really I've never seen anything like

an American lawyer; they are so awfully skeptical. He looked it over thoughtfully, turned it about, removed the stopper, and smelled the contents.

"Regular salts, that," he commented. "I wonder why it was so necessary for Count Rouessel to get it back?"

"It's an heirloom," I repeated.

Of course, he didn't drop the stopper purposely; it just slipped, as things have a way of doing sometimes; but there it was on the floor, broken very nicely, and—well, I nearly had hysterics. Something gleamed as Billy picked it up.

"By George!" he exclaimed.

Suddenly he seized a paper weight, and there under my astonished eyes he smashed that green stopper to atoms.

"An emerald!" he said, holding up a huge stone, which had come out cleanly from its glass encasement. "And that's why Count Rouessel was so particular about getting back his smelling salts."

"Billy, you don't think—" I began.

"Looks like smuggling," he said. He reached for the telephone. "Get me chief of police," he told exchange.

Five minutes later we were on our way to police headquarters. And with this new development I forgot to ask, and he forgot to tell me, what had been done toward proving to whom my diamond necklace belonged.

When we arrived at police headquarters, who should we find there but our perfectly authentic little French count? When we came in, he was trying to appear unconscious of a pair of handcuffs pinching his delicate wrists. Well, nothing could surprise me after all that had happened. We rather expect French counts to be villains, anyway.

The chief of police ushered us into a reception room while we waited for Mr. and Mrs. Collis to arrive. The necklace I had taken from Mrs. Collis was really her own, purchased abroad, and duty paid at customs. My necklace had been found in the search of the count's apartments; he had been traced through a photograph in the locket, which he had dropped in the flat, and which I had picked up. The night I found the flat disordered and my necklace gone,

Count Rouessel had gone there to search for his little green bottle, not believing my story about the woman in the brown dress, and evidently thinking I had a motive in wishing to keep the bottle. Of course, he did not hesitate to take along my necklace when he came across it.

My mistake was a natural one, as the necklaces were precisely alike. Billy gave Mrs. Collis hers, the chief of police gave me mine; then Billy produced the emerald.

It seems that Count Rouessel had stolen that famous emerald belonging to—oh, that Indian prince—you remember. He had not dared try to dispose

of it in Europe, so he conceived the idea of molding it into the stopper of a smelling-salts bottle, and came to America. His scheme was so clever that he passed customs safely, but on the day of Mrs. Van Der Greave's dinner party secret-service men paid him a visit. He thought it best to get rid of the bottle, in the event of their searching his person and apartment. I wasn't ill at all. It was a trick to give me the custody of the bottle.

Oh, I've decided not to let Billy change the necklace, even though Mrs. Collis has one like it. You see, Billy kissed it, and—well, I'm afraid that settles it.



## THE DESERTED GARDEN

**I** WATCHED you while upon your dark-brown hair  
The glint of gold defied the gathering dusk;  
The lust of Summer slumbered in the air,  
And red-lipped pinks breathed out their subtle musk.

I felt your presence like a sweet perfume—  
A fragrant breath that breathed into my soul  
The passion of the Summer and its bloom  
To set Love's fires ablaze beyond control!

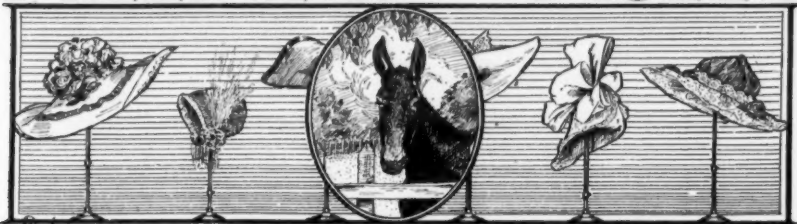
Oh, like a storm Love swept the barriers down,  
And all the world but Love was in eclipse,  
And canopied by wind-blown locks of brown,  
I felt the burning fragrance of your lips!

Ah, that was years and years and years ago,  
And since that night we two have never met;  
Another claimed you; still the roses blow,  
And red-lipped pinks bloom in the garden yet.

The Summer comes with bloom and fragrant dusk  
And haunting musk of rose at close of day,  
**But** what is Summer or the roses' musk  
To the lone heart when Love has flown away?

WILL LISENREE.

# MILLINERY and MULES



BY MARIE CONWAY OEMLER

**W**HEN "The Widow from Paris" had, after many moribund struggles, finally given up her salacious ghost in a Southern city, even being stranded among strangers hadn't held for Fanny Kenny the sheer terror of having to play nightly in that frightful farce into which a despairing chance had pitchforked her.

Having in one season cut her silly wisdom teeth upon the brass ring of a stage career, Fanny knew, of course, that when you're as "up against it" as she was, one of two things happen—either women aren't kind to you at all, or men are willing to be too kind.

It was only when she at first courageously and then desperately sought work of any kind, which wouldn't materialize; and the Too-kind Man materialized too obviously; and a landlady from hints proceeded to demands, that Fanny's gay courage began to shrivel about the edges.

One after another the company had drifted northward; but it was forced upon her that there wasn't room for any member of it in any firm in the city. Nobody, it seemed, wanted her in any capacity. And the Too-kind Man's face wore a cool and smiling look of *waiting* which enraged and terrified her. And then one day she came wearily home to find a landlady buckramed with determination to let Miss Kenny know once for all that her room was distinctly more desirable than her company.

"No, Miss Kenny, I couldn't keep you no more reelly. I went out of my way to take you at all, you being an actress, and me being a widder and particular about my roomers; not that I got a word to say against you as a lady. But you know yourself you *was* with a bum show, Miss Kenny; it's *got* to be a bum show that goes to pieces in this town. And women's queer, Miss Kenny. All of 'em in this house had just as lief as not pick up and leave me with my rooms empty, on your account. And then where'd I be, and me a widder? And not a full month's board, Miss Kenny, since you been here."

When things come to a crisis one has to do something, one way or the other.

"So it's my move!" thought Fanny grimly. Aloud she said politely: "I'm sorry I wasn't able to find work, and pay you in full, Mrs. Lawler. And I don't suppose there's any use in my waiting—so I'll go right now."

Half an hour later, a battered suit case in her hand, a veil concealing the weariness and pallor of her face, Fanny left her boarding house.

"And now for Whatever-is-going-to-happen!" she thought. A trolley car was coming in her direction; not knowing what else to do, Fanny caught it. When she had been thrice around the circuit the conductor, collecting the third nickel, and seeing his passenger in a brown study, asked respectfully:

"Anywheres you'd want to git off, miss?"

Fanny glanced out of the window and saw, half a block ahead, the towers of the Union Station.

"Railroad," she said briefly.

She sat for an hour in the ladies' waiting room. Where was she going? And what was she going to do when she got there?

"But I've got to go somewhere—away from here," she reflected, panicky at the bare notion of remaining, at this turn of her fortune, in the same city with the Too-kind Man.

She emptied the contents of her purse into her lap; dividing into two pitifully small piles the eight dollars and sixty-two cents which her last good frock and her mother's turquoise ring had brought. A cup of hot coffee, a sandwich, and an apple reduced one small pile by a quarter, but Fanny's innate buoyancy rose as her healthy hunger vanished.

"Where can I go for four dollars and thirty-one cents?" she asked the ticket seller pleasantly.

He stared.

"Got any idea where y'wanta go?"

"No," said Fanny frankly. "I haven't. But I want to go four dollars and thirty-one cents' worth, please."

The ticket seller picked up a big white card, ran an expert eye fluently up and down those banal names which brand small American towns, reached for a little pink slip, punched it, and thrust it through the little hole in front of his cage—all in the twinkling of an eye.

"Four-twenty-nine, miss. Two cents change. Train in four minutes. Better beat it."

Once in the hot, plush-upholstered car, Fanny drew a long breath. "Where on earth am I going?" she wondered. The pink slip mentioned a perfectly commonplace name. "But why?" she wondered again.

"Because," herself answered, "you're too good for the worst, and not good enough for the best. The truth is, Fanny, you're just a silly little ba-ahing lamb that's been trying to gambol in the goat pasture and got butted out, as served you right, you blithering little, withering little, slithering little idjit!

So you're stranded; and your landlady wanted her money and her room; and there's somebody that wanted you—the wrong way, Fanny. And you're scared stiff—and you're beating it."

Fanny sat for a while, staring out at the flat landscape blurring by the car windows.

"But I've never done a single thing that I need to blush for, except my acting," she said to herself presently. "In that respect nobody on earth ever acted worse than I did." She giggled hysterically when she remembered just how bad that acting had been. "And now it's for four-twenty-nine worth of distance—and a chance to do something I can do. I've got to get a job, and get it quick; and I'm going to get it."

The distance began to evaporate. At one of the two stops between her and the vivid name on the pink ticket the colored porter stuck his woolly head inside the car door, yapped wolfishly, and disappeared.

"This must be a dreadful little place, to be called things like that!" mused Fanny.

It was, in fact, one of those scrawly, sandy, perky little towns with the usual string of top-heavy little stores butting at the railroad track. In the middle of this fractious line-up, occupying a whole block, square, red, like a solid, stolid Hereford among a crowd of beligerent little billy goats, a big brick building loomed. Across the entire front, in three-foot letters, the gaping tourist got, like a brick in the eye:

#### JOE BATTLE: MILLINERY AND MULES

Fanny Kenny blinked, gasped, obeyed a sudden wild impulse, jerked her parasol down from the rack, grabbed up her old suit case, made a rush through the door, and nimbly jumped off the train just as the conductor bawled: "A-a-w-ll Uh-b-o-a-d!"

Without a backward glance Fanny scudded across the sandy street, and entered the red-brick building, whose whole lower front, made into display windows, bourgeoned with hats; hats outrageous, flamboyant, demure, be-



witching, coy, shy, bold, naughty modest, soulful, flirtatious, alluring, repelling, childish, maidenly, wifely, spinsterly, widowy, citified, countryfied, betwixt-and-between, there they were. Fanny gasped again.

A large, leisurely man, with a large, leisurely face made refined by a clean-cut nose, and significant by a pair of piercing gray eyes, resignedly put down a thumbed Horace, and moved gently and inevitably toward her.

"Millinery?" he wondered, in a beautiful voice. "You haven't come for a hat. New, Milan straw, trimmed, ten-fifty." He appraised hers critically.

"Nine-ninety-eight," murmured Fanny, bewildered.

"No, there isn't a sign of hat buying in your eye," he went on meditatively. "Could you want a mule, now, I wonder? Nowadays women are apt to want anything and everything—and get it, too. If you do want a mule, do you want one to plow with, or just to play with?"

Fanny's big brown eyes went their biggest and brownest.

"I never had a mule to play with," she murmured regretfully. "I never thought of it, and if I had thought of it, I hadn't the time, or the money, or the mule, ever. But it's a beautiful idea, Mr.——"

"Battle. Joe Battle: Millinery and mules."

"Mr. Battle. But I don't want a hat, and I don't want a mule. Mr. Battle, I want a job. I want one bad. I've got to have a job. I saw your sign, and it looked big—and—inviting. And I jumped off the train, Mr. Battle, to see if—if I hadn't guessed right."

Her voice was fairly steady, her eyes were steady, and she kept her chin from quivering; but something in the young face was raw-edged with fear and weariness, and he saw it.

"These girl-kids!" he thought. "These poor, plucky, pushed-to-the-wall girl-kids!"

"But you didn't stop over here, child, a-purpose to settle a guess with yourself!" he protested.

"Why, yes, I did," said Fanny, rather

faintly. "I saw your sign—and something in it called, and made me hope—and I grabbed my grip and jumped."

"You couldn't have been honin' to get where you were bound for before you saw my sign," he remarked tentatively.

"I honed," said Fanny, "just exactly four dollars and twenty-nine cents' worth, Mr. Battle."

Mr. Battle whistled, and ran his hands through his hair.

"Sit down," he invited. "Take a chair, Miss——"

Fanny hesitated, remembering the Too-kind Man's pertinacity.

"Kenny. But would just plain Smith do as well?" she asked anxiously.

"Smith," he agreed, "is a nice, non-committal name, but as yours is Kenny, we'd better stick to Kenny. And now, Miss Kenny, let's get down to brass tacks. The fact is, I do need help. I told Aunt Dossia last night she had to quit pottering about this store and stay upstairs and housekeep. On the strength of this, you get a psychic hunch when my alliterative lure greets your passing eye; you light out of that crawling caterpillar of a train, and make a hike for millinery and mules. Uh-huh!"

He leaned back in his chair, with his hands in his pockets.

"I believe in the psychic hunch, Miss Kenny," he said equably. "'Two shall be born the whole wide world apart,' and one of 'em shall hop off a Central Railroad train when the other needs help with his millinery and mules. Why, it'd be flying in the face of Providence to send you away. Will ten a week until you're halter-broke keep you, Miss Kenny?"

"But you don't know anything in the world about me!" protested honest Fanny. "Why, I might be——"

He chuckled.

"Pooh, child, pooh! Also, piffle!" said he amiably, waving his big hand. "When you know millinery—lovely woman, Miss Kenny, and mules, mere man, should you think a slip of a girl-kid could take you in? Say, come out here a minute, please. I've got two silent partners; if they approve of you

—and I'd back their judgment with my last dollar—why, we'll call it ten a week and a steady job until you get tired and quit."

The girl followed him through a small door, and found herself ushered into a huge, airy barn, smelling cleanly of horses and hay. One extra large stall held a small black pony and a red Irish setter dog.

"Solomon," said Mr. Battle gravely, "Solomon, I want your candid opinion of this young lady? You, too, Sheba. Sit up and say what you think of her? She wants to stay; I want her to stay. Now don't you go and back down on my judgment!"

The black pony trotted out inquisitively, the red setter beside him. Both walked gravely and sedately around the staring Fanny. The pony smelled her all over; both looked at her with eyes never darkened by deceit, and she looked back with eyes sadder, but quite as clear and candid.

Sheba, with feminine quickness of perception, decided first, and held up a paw; Solomon wrinkled his velvety nose, and nuzzled the girl's cheek; the dog's friendly tongue licked her hand. Fanny's overstrained nerve broke. She slid down, leaned her head against the dog, and howled; and the dog, her whole satiny body quivering with sympathy, whined.

"Hnnnnnn!" said the pony.

"Hell!" said Mr. Battle, jamming his fists in his pockets.

"Joe Battle!" cried an irate voice from the yard door. "Joe Battle, ain't you mortal 'shamed o' yourself, and her nothin' but a child, too!"

The speaker ran to the sobbing Fanny, slid a wiry old arm about her shoulders, and turned indignant eyes upon the big man.

"Land alive, Joe Battle, won't you never learn sense? Bringin' a Christian child out into a stable, an' settin' up against her the judgment of brute beasts! Not that they don't show mo' sense than you do at times, Joe Battle! Land alive, child, 'tain't no wonder you're cryin'. Such goin's on is enough to make a camel cry, much less a young

gal. There, there, child, set up. You're comin' right upstairs with me this minute. As for you, Joe Battle, Lord forgive you! You a full forty year old, an' actin' like a cannibal savage!"

"Aunt Dosia—"

"Don't you open your mouth to me, Joe Battle—don't I know you? You been 'sociatin' with mules so long you act like 'em at times. Who ever heard the beat of such doin's?"

Fanny looked up forlornly, her hat over her ear, her hair straggling into her eyes, her nose a sea-shell pink.

"But I'm crying—be-cause they're—they're so kind!" she gasped. "The p-pony—k-kissed me—li-like he was—g-glad to see me. The—the dog—li-licked my hand like—like a—f-friend! And—I—oh, oh, oh!"

"Good Lord, child, folks must 'a' been treatin' you somethin' awful to make you cry jest 'cause a horse an' a dog act nat'ral," said Aunt Dosia, in an awed voice. "You get up this minute, and come upstairs. I'm goin' to doctor you with a good hot cup o' tea an' some vittles."

"Steady, now; steady, girl!" said the big man soothingly, as he helped her to her feet, and patted her on the shoulder. "There, there, there!"

"Joe Battle, you talkin' to a mule?" demanded Aunt Dosia.

Mr. Battle smiled twistedly. But Fanny had seen his eyes.

Opposite Miss Theodosia Battle at a well-spread table, her hair in order, her face fresh, she presented a more attractive appearance. The old lady glanced over her approvingly.

"You don't look a mite like what he looks like now," said she, somewhat wistfully, pouring out the tea, "but you do look like what Joe Battle might have looked like if he'd been the girl child I wanted him to be, 'stead of the hulkin' feller he turned out."

"I think," said Fanny, from the bottom of her heart, "that he is the most beautiful man I ever saw, Miss Dosia."

"I know just how you mean it, child, an' I don't know but what you're right," agreed the old lady, her eyes suddenly very bright. "An' now, as he wants you

to stay an' help him, begin callin' me Aunt Dosia," she added.

From that minute she took Fanny into her warm old heart and kept her there.

A little later Mr. Battle outlined Fanny's future.

"In the local temple of fame," he said gravely, "I occupy a peculiar niche. We're a half-farming, half-commercial, and half-baked community. I supply their mules to the men, their millinery to the ladies, their meddlesome-mission-arying to both, I being the local heathen. My 'M' comes in between—money, Miss Kenny, money."

He stopped to give his funny chuckle.

"Now, I suppose," he resumed pensively, "that you take it for granted *you're* to meander through the mazes of millinery, and I'm to wrestle with mules? Lord bless your heart, no. We are going to obviate the obvious. *I* am going to dabble in millinery, Miss Kenny, and *you're* going to sell those mules."

"Joe Battle, of all the crazy—" began his aunt.

"There isn't a woman alive that don't think she can skin me in the hat line," said Mr. Battle imperturbably. "There isn't a man alive that won't fall all over himself in the effort to do *you* on a mule deal. All you have to do is to stick like furniture glue to the price list I coach you on. Sell? Whoo-ee! We're going to double sales from now on. Come on downstairs."

Fanny went, wondering if she wouldn't presently wake up.

"Tell me," said Mr. Battle, "what you think of that bay beauty in the front stall?"

Fanny looked from the big man to the big mule helplessly. He waited patiently.

"He—he has a nice, wriggly skin," she said faintly. "And I think," she added desperately, "that the—way his tail hangs is—is pretty, Mr. Battle."

"It is," he encouraged. "You are not to take a cent under three-seventy-five for that mule, Miss Kenny, chiefly on account of the pretty way his tail

hangs. You'll remember? Now, express your candid opinion of the next one?"

"I don't like," said Fanny truthfully, "the expression of his legs. And his eye has a sort of—of biting look, Mr. Battle."

"His expression," said Mr. Battle, "is altogether criminal. Mark him down to three-fifty, Miss Kenny, and stick to it. Next?"

"Why, I think that fawn-colored mule is perfectly beautiful, Mr. Battle," said Fanny. "I never saw a nicer mule. His ears stick up so inquiringly, and he does look so cheerful and obliging!"

"Five hundred is *his* tag," said Mr. Battle firmly. "Not a penny under. Intellectual ears, *and* a cheerful and obliging character ought to be worth more. Come in strong on the morals of that mule, Miss Kenny, if any gentleman kicks on the money part."

They went down the whole length of the place, Fanny like one in a trance, Mr. Battle cheerfully attentive, Aunt Dosia loquaciously resentful, or helplessly mirthful.

"It's scandalous, Joe Battle!" she exclaimed.

"It's a stroke of genius, Aunt Dosia," said he. "And she'll learn."

"If you're really in earnest, I'd rather deal with just animals, for a while at least, if I might," said Fanny timidly.

Mr. Battle proceeded daily to "halter-break" his assistant.

"There's loads of money in this move," he had chuckled.

There was. Fanny learned quickly. All she had to do, as he had said, was to remember the prices, and stick to them. When a buyer urged objectionable features Fanny remembered so many pleasant ones!

"Look what pretty eyes he has, and what an amiable expression!" she would say enthusiastically. "Why, he's a perfectly lovely mule!"

And on the other side of the partition Mr. Battle, an airy bunch of straw and flowers on his big forefinger, might be saying to the buyer's wife:

"Yes, *ma'am*. Suits you to a T. Just the thing to show off the color of your

hair and eyes, too, Mrs. Brown. And only nine dollars!"

Presently he raised Fanny's ten a week to fifteen.

"You're really worth more," he said whimsically, "but I'm afraid to spoil you by giving you more. So long as I underpay and overwork you, you'll be contented and happy. Just as soon as I appreciate you, you'll pick up and get married, or do something else equally reprehensible."

"But—but I'm not even allowed to pay my board, Mr. Battle," protested Fanny. "Aunt Dossia quarrels at the bare idea of it." The tears came into her brown eyes. "I'm not really working at all," she went on hurriedly. "I've found a home, and I'm alive and happy for the first time since I was born; and I think, instead of offering me more money, you ought to allow me to pay something for what I get."

"Oh, you pay for what you get, Fanny," said Mr. Battle quietly. "Everybody has to, one way or another. You pay with your youth, and prettiness, and sweetness, child, for anything two old fogies like Aunt Dossia and I can do for you. And—you *do* sell mules, Fanny," he chuckled. "Go and take Solomon and Sheba out for an airing, will you? You advertise me, my dear; so don't thank me."

Fanny was beginning to be really very happy, when into her peaceful and pleasant life came again the Too-kind Man. One can't go very far for four dollars and twenty-nine cents. And the ticket seller, when asked, remembered the girl the Too-kind Man described. Beside, people up and down the road talked amusedly of the pretty girl that sold mules for Joe Battle. It hadn't been very hard to find Fanny when the Too-kind Man decided he really wanted to find her.

"Well," said he, quietly walking into the store, "so here you are! I knew it must be you, because I wanted so much to find you. And here I am."

"Did you come," said Fanny, chin in air, "to buy a mule?"

"No," said the Too-kind Man, laughing. "I didn't. I came to see you,

Fanny; just to see you, and for nothing else. Didn't you know, Fanny, that I had to come, sooner or later?"

"I didn't think," said Fanny directly, "that even you'd waste any more time so—so foolishly." She blushed, and it made her very, very prettily. "And will you please say what you came to say, and then go away again?" she asked.

He laughed again pleasantly. He was very handsome—a tall man, with an erect and graceful figure, and a cool, lazy face. Over his nose glasses, which added to his air of distinction, he smiled at her quizzically.

"She won't," he complained, "even shake hands with me. She isn't a bit, the least littlest bit, glad to see me!"

"I am, of course, very ungrateful," said Fanny coldly. "I ought to remember how kind you were willing to be."

He ignored this, looking smilingly about the great barn.

"I came," he admitted, "to keep you from forgetting me, Fanny. By and by I'll come back again. And, by the way, may I ask if these good people you're with now know that they're entertaining no less a personage than the late ingénue of the—er—famous 'Widow'?"

"They know," said Fanny, "all they want to know. They know, too, that I'm worth the trust—and—and—affection they've shown me."

He pulled his short mustache.

"Nice little town, this," he commented idly. "Ve-ry straitlaced, however. Known 'em to turn people out of the church for dancing a dreary little polka. Known 'em to excommunicate the players of casino. As for players of the stage, now—ch? Any of 'em know, Fanny?"

"There isn't anything for any of them to know," said Fanny resolutely.

"Dessay you're quite right not to mention it," he agreed pleasantly. "When they find out on their own hook—and get pleasant, why, you know where to find me, Fanny. And I'll be in to see you again, my dear. Good-by."

Fanny never knew how it happened, but the little town *did* hear of the "Widow from Paris." It was a godly

little town, and it "acted accordin'." From covert looks, sneers, and innuendoes, it went to overt acts of unfriendliness. Why, that girl at Joe Battle's had *played in a perfectly frightful French play!* The police had had to *interfere!*

The Ladies' Aid took the matter in hand. They didn't often have the chance to take such matters in hand. The result was Miss Kenny wasn't asked to any bazaars or musicales or teas. The undertaker's wife—the undertaker was also postmaster—looked the other way when she met "that woman" on Solomon. The deacon's wife—the deacon kept the Dry Goods and Grocery Emporium—asked Miss Dosia to her tea feast, pointedly omitting Miss Kenny. And the other ladies got busy and made themselves just as interesting to Miss Kenny as only women can be to other women. When this had gone on for some time, somebody wrote the usual anonymous letter to Mr. Battle. Fanny saw his face when he read it; saw him crush it in his hand; saw him look at her curiously. Her heart went down sickeningly.

"Is it—anything about—me?" she asked.

Mr. Battle's jaw protruded.

"It's intended to be, Fanny," he said truthfully.

"They—they've been acting—unfriendly, because they'd heard I was—in that play," quavered Fanny. "It was an awful play, Mr. Battle. But I had to take it, when the chance came. And perhaps"—she turned her head aside—"perhaps I'd better go away, before I bring any trouble or worry on you—and Miss Dosia," she added.

"Trouble?" Mr. Battle chewed his under lip reflectively. "This is a beastly little town at times, Fanny," he remarked. "But you mustn't blame these folks too much. It isn't their hearts, Fanny. It's their dam' conventions." He leaned forward. "And do you *want* to leave Aunt Dosia and me, Fanny?"

Fanny turned pale, clasping and unclasping her hands. He drew a breath of relief.

"No," he said slowly, "you aren't

ready to leave us—yet. And now," he added kindly, "you get on Solomon, take Sheba with you, and go for a canter. Fine for all three of you."

When Fanny had obediently set forth, he sat for a long time at his desk, going over certain books and papers. Then he stepped into the big red touring car which was his one extravagance, and drove himself first to the undertaker's, thence to the deacon's. Neither ever told what transpired, and Mr. Battle himself never afterward referred to it. It had often been said that "No one knew just how much people owed Joe Battle—he just about owned this town."

"Mr. Battle, do you know that the deacon's wife has been here, and insists that auntie and I shall have tea with her to-morrow evening; and the minister and his wife called, too, and the undertaker's wife stopped me on the street—to admire Solomon?" Fanny remarked to Mr. Battle a few days later.

"So?" mused Mr. Battle, without a smile. "Well, you can go if you like, Fanny. I think auntie'd like to gad about a bit with you."

So Fanny went, and met the minister's brother, who took to haunting Mr. Battle's stables during the rest of his stay, greatly to the big man's annoyance.

"Why don't you fix up a special stall for that little ass?" he growled at Fanny.

"Why, if the poor little man's in your way—" she began apologetically.

Mr. Battle's face cleared.

"Lord, no, Fanny!" he said cheerfully. "If the poor little man isn't in your way, he shouldn't be in mine."

But there were others beside the minister's brother who took to haunting Mr. Battle's place of business. To his own astonishment the big man viewed these erstwhile good friends and customers with unfriendly sentiments.

"What the deuce ails you, Joe Battle?" he demanded of himself, turning restlessly upon a pillow whereon he should have been soundly sleeping. "It couldn't be—why, good God!" He sat

suddenly erect, and trembled. "You all of forty, and a red-necked old fool, and she a girl-kid! You're in a devil of a fix, Joe Battle, ain't you?"

For Mr. Battle had, after the time-honored manner of men, fallen in love. The forlorn girl who had jumped off the train on a wild chance had, given care, and happiness, and useful work, blossomed into peachy prettiness.

Next to this bright youth, the man felt his forty years pile into forty centuries on his back. The sight of other men—young men—around her, made him ill. Why, she had come to *him*—she was *his*. No, dear Lord, she wasn't! She was only a pretty child that had strayed into his older existence. She would flit away presently, with a younger and handsomer mate.

Mr. Battle, to hide his misery, put on a grim and forbidding manner. He knew himself to be a great lummoX of a fellow of forty in love with a chit of a girl—and jealous, too. But he couldn't help it. And in consequence he led the pair of them a dance that sent Miss Dosia to her Bible for comfort, and left Fanny in tears.

The plain truth never occurred to Fanny. From the first she had put the man upon a pedestal—and he hadn't shown the slightest sign of wobbling. She wondered if there were business trouble of which she knew nothing. She wondered if he had grown tired of her, and if she hadn't better go. She wondered if there was some woman for whom he cared. But he had never, never mentioned any woman. Fanny felt, on that score, somewhat relieved.

And at this psychological moment the Too-kind Man sauntered in—gay, cool, debonair. And Fanny and Aunt Dosia had had such a day of it with Mr. Battle!

"Fanny," said the Too-kind Man directly, "Fanny, I've come to tell you that I've been a blundering fool!" He searched her face with hungry eyes. "Oh, my girl, try to forgive me! I can't be happy without you, Fanny. You're worth everything else in the world squeezed together. You're too dear and too good for me, and I know

it. But if you will forgive my brute stupidity, and marry me, Fanny, I'll spend the rest of my life trying to make up to you. And a man has a real big chance to make a woman happy, Fanny, when he loves her as much as I love you. Will you have me?"

He looked very fine, and dignified, and handsome. And he did really have a great deal to offer Fanny—a name worth bearing, a home worth sharing. Once in his safe-keeping, Fanny knew her life would be free of all want and worry. And oh, more than all, he wanted her! Her eyes filled with tears, her lips quivered. The Too-kind Man took her hands very gently, and bent his tall head to kiss them.

"I could almost love you for asking me right now," she said truthfully. "But not quite. And I don't want to say No, and I'm afraid to say Yes, feeling as I do—or, rather, not knowing just how I do feel. You understand?" She looked at him piteously.

"I think I do, Fanny," he said. "And it's my own fault, too, my dear. Perhaps I should force you right now to a decision. But I've given you enough trouble, Fanny, God forgive me! So you take a week, dear girl, and think this over. Then I'll come back, Fanny, and I pray to Heaven that you'll want to say Yes as much as I want to hear you say it." He looked about the big barn, and shuddered. "To think of *you* being in such a place!" he muttered angrily.

Fanny remembered the one-night stands, and the day coaches, and the company, and the hotels. She favored him with a curious and intent look. Then her eyes wandered away from him, and over bay and brown and gray bodies, and twitching ears, and big, clear eyes.

"Why," she said thoughtfully, "I love this place. It's the nicest place I've ever known, and the cleanest. If I have to leave it, I'll dream of it at night when I have pleasant dreams, and I'll think of it in the day when I want to remember and be good."

"It's no place for you!" he objected authoritatively. "Why, I never in all



my life knew of a girl who sold mules for a living!"

A deep, deep shadow darkened her eyes.

"But you knew a girl—that you thought, once, might sell—herself—for a living," she said, in a tense whisper. And to the day of his death he remembered her eyes.

"Fanny!" he said, shocked, and pained, and remorseful. "Fanny!"

And he caught her hands again, in a passion of tenderness, and kissed them. Mr. Battle, coming in at that moment, saw the pretty tableau, turned on his heel, and walked out with a face grown of a sudden gray and old. Fanny's heart turned a somersault. She almost hated the Too-kind Man.

"Go—please go!" she implored.

"For a week," he agreed.

Fanny watched him walk across the street—tall, easy, splendid—and swing himself lithely aboard his car. Then, with a lagging step, she went into the millinery department, where Mr. Battle, with a pale and rigid countenance, sat at his desk pretending to read his Horace. Pain and jealousy made him meet her appealing glance with a cold eye. So! She wanted to tell him she was going to leave, did she? Oh, very well!

"Well?" he snapped.

"Nothing, Mr. Battle," mumbled Fanny, her courage gone below zero.

"You needn't," said Mr. Battle, "tell me anything. Beside, I saw him." He stared out of the window. "Coming back in a week, eh?" he asked presently. "Well, I've got trouble enough right now. I don't want to hear any palaver about another man's perfections. I don't want to hear anything at all about it. When you get ready to quit, tell me."

Fanny went back into the stable, and put her arms around Solomon's neck.

"I wish," she said wistfully, "oh, Solomon, dear, I wish people were as kind, and good, and loving as you and Sheba are! But they aren't, Solomon, dear. They love you the wrong way. And when they love you the right way

they're the wrong people, and the right people won't and don't love you at all, Solomon. And oh, do, please, darling Solomon, nuzzle me some more!"

Aunt Dosia had had a painful attack of rheumatism, to which the kind old woman was a martyr; and Fanny hadn't had the courage to speak to her about the Too-kind Man. All the next day Mr. Battle sat at his desk, when he wasn't selling hats, and pretended to read Horace. But for once the soft, sonorous Latin failed to soothe him. Presently Fanny saw him get out his car. When he was ready to go he came to her.

"I've got to sit up to-night with ol' man Smalley," he told her. "My turn to-night, you know, and the old devil's great on his lodge brethren doing their duty. You take charge, Fanny—there isn't much doing, anyhow."

Fanny went to bed that night with a bad headache. Miss Dosia had recommended—or rather insisted upon—an application of vinegar and brown paper. A hearty fit of crying had brought added relief, then came the healthy reaction of youth, and Fanny slept soundly.

It was past midnight when a crackling noise awoke her. Vaguely alarmed, she sat up, and heard the noise more plainly. She began, then, to cough and splutter; the room was full of a stifling and acrid smoke. When she jumped out of bed the floor was hot to her feet.

For a terrific second her heart stood still. Then her courage came back with a rush. She slipped her bare feet into her slippers, wriggled herself into a kimono, snatched up her bedspread, and sped into Aunt Dosia's room. She couldn't rouse Aunt Dosia, so she picked up the thin old body, and staggered downstairs with it. Once in the open air, Aunt Dosia woke up, understood, and collapsed. In the big stable the mules were stamping and squealing. Sheba was barking frantically, and Solomon gave one long, shrill scream.

Aunt Dosia was powerless to help; the colored cook, apron over head, teeth chattering like castanets, stood by wringing her hands, and groaning inar-

ticulate prayers. The mulatto boy, lately employed, had lost his wits.

Solomon screamed again, and Fanny clenched her teeth. Before other help came it would be too late. And Mr. Battle had intrusted everything to her. And her two friends were shut up in that death trap.

With a steady hand Fanny unbarred the big doors, caught up her bedspread, and went in. The smoke met her in rolling clouds.

Sheba howled with rapture at the sight of the girl, and tried frantically to make the pony follow her. But the glare frightened Solomon. He crouched back in his stall, quivering. Fanny got the spread over his head, gripped her hand in his mane, and started for the door. And he followed, Sheba at his heels, out into the yard.

The mulatto boy got his wits then, and came to Fanny's aid. With the cook's apron he followed her back into the stable.

There had been a large sale the day before, and only about a dozen animals were left in the place. But they were greatly terrified, and hard to manage; they reared, screamed, trampled. Fanny had as much to fear from them as from the spreading fire.

Before help reached her the fire had gotten good headway; the spread was charred and burned. Fanny's eyes were one stinging pain, her face scorched, her hair singed, and she limped from a hoof trample on her foot.

Outside, Aunt Dosia was shrilly imploring everybody to keep Fanny from going into that furnace any more; begging Heaven to send Joe Battle home, when, as if in answer to her prayers, he came roaring up in his car.

"Fanny's in the stable!" shrieked Aunt Dosia.

A group of men on whose pallid faces the flames cast lurid lights, stood at a safe distance from the opened doors, in which they were staring. At intervals a billowing burst of smoke poured out, and for an after instant one saw the blazing interior.

Out of the fire itself, it seemed to his

horrified eyes, staggered Fanny, the last mule following her, its head smothered in a smoldering spread. Fanny was swaying on her feet. Before the man could get to her, the spread burst into a little line of fire, the mule gave a cry of terror, made a headlong forward rush, and charged into the yard and safety. But Fanny fell. And then the smoke covered everything.

On his hands and knees Mr. Battle crawled forward. A thousand years elapsed before he reached her; another million before he staggered outside into the fresh air.

He thought, when he could look down at her, that she was dead, so still she lay on his arm. A great bellowing, terrible cry burst from him—such a cry as might have echoed across primeval forests when the saber-toothed tiger had slain the cave man's mate.

The women came about him, then, but he wouldn't give her to any of them. He didn't even remember his waiting car. He turned his back on his blazing house as one might on a child's holiday bonfire, and with his girl in his arms walked half a mile to the deacon's house, and laid her on the immaculate spare-room bed. The deacon's wife cried over the bruised and swollen foot which the mule's hoof had pressed.

Fanny woke to find herself in a strange room; her arms, up to the shoulders, were bandaged; on her face were soft cloths wet with cooling lotions; she was bandaged from ankle to knee; and she could feel more bandages, shoulders to hips. The doctor, the deacon's wife, and Aunt Dosia stood at the foot of her bed. Beside it sat a very big man, rigidly erect.

"There she comes!" said the doctor cheerfully, and gave her something to drink.

The deacon's wife began to cry, called her a "darling child," kissed her on the forehead, and went out softly, with the doctor. Aunt Dosia came and knelt beside her, all rheumatism forgotten. Fanny glanced, then, at the big man beside the bed, and blinked. Mr. Battle was crying shamelessly.

Fanny pondered this. Then—

"Aren't you glad I'm going to get better?" she asked curiously, almost impersonally.

He turned his head to look down at her. Something in his eyes brought a like something into Fanny's. His nose was red, his eyes were red, his cheeks stained, his hair on end; but as Fanny had once told Aunt Dosia, she thought him the most beautiful man she had ever seen. A tremulously mischievous smile crept to her pale lips.

"My hand," she murmured, "the one right next to you, hurts. I think—it would feel better—if you'd hold it for me, Mr. Battle."

With a shaking hand he obeyed.

"If anything—had happened to those animals—particularly Solomon and Sheba, I think I'd have died," she said, after a pause.

Mr. Battle groaned.

"Oh, my God!" said he. "To think I left her—to risk her life!"

"I wish," said Fanny irrelevantly, "that you'd give me—Solomon and Sheba—for a wedding present, Mr. Battle. If you don't think," she added, "that I'm asking too much."

Mr. Battle straightened himself in his chair, and put down the bandaged hand. He forced Fanny to meet his eyes.

"You can have them, Fanny, and welcome," he said. "And now listen, my dear. You're going to marry another man. You're half my age, and you're beautiful, and all a girl should be. And I'm ugly and forty. But I love you, too, Fanny, with all my heart, and you don't need to be ashamed of it, my dear, nor sorry for me. For you've brought a beautiful something into a

life that wouldn't have known anything like it if you hadn't come. I love you enough, Fanny, to say: 'Go and be happy, and good-by, and God bless you.'"

In Fanny's swathed face the eyes grew big and sweet.

"Why," said she contentedly, "now I won't have to go at all. I can stay. And I'll keep Solomon and Sheba—thank you. But—you might have told me, Mr. Battle."

"Fanny," said the big man, turning pale; "Fanny, dear Fanny, you—you aren't delirious, are you? For if—you know what you're saying, Fanny, I—I might think that you—that you think—"

"Why, of course I do!" said Fanny simply.

"Heaven bless us!" said Aunt Dosia, and sat flat on the floor, hugging herself.

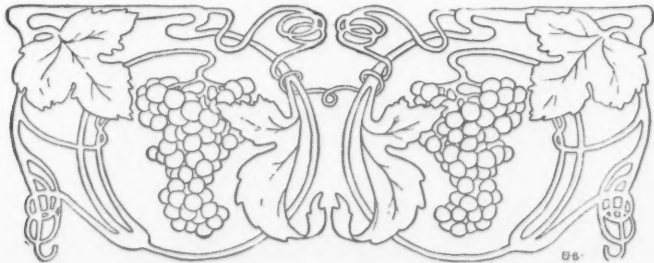
When the doctor came in again, Mr. Battle demanded anxiously:

"How long before she'll be up?"

"In two weeks," said the doctor, "I'll have her sound as a trivet, please the Lord." For he was a pious man.

"In two weeks, then," said Mr. Battle genially, "we'll put the biggest, bluest M of all alongside of millinery and mules: matrimony, Fanny, matrimony! And now, my dear, as I'll never have but one bride, and she's got to be mighty bride-y, I'm going out to telegraph to town for a trousseau; I'm going to see the minister; Fanny, I'm going to be married!"

And he stooped down, very tenderly and boyishly, and kissed his girl on her lips.





# The SUSPECT

By  
Edgar Saltus

**H**OW much do you want?" the pawnbroker asked.  
"Oh," I said, with an air of assumed indifference, "a hundred will do."

The pawnbroker gave me a queer, sharp look, one which he instantly diverted to the gold cigarette case, a rather elaborate affair, that I had offered him, and which had on it in jewels the initials K. M.

He looked up at me again.

"At auction it wouldn't bring half that. Twenty is the best I can do."

It was idle to argue; besides, I never can haggle. But I needed more. I told him so. In the telling, I produced a watch, also gold, also initialed, one that had in it the miniature of a girl's fair face.

He looked it over, and, darting another queer glance at me, snapped: "Fifteen!"

At once, as I nodded, he got out some bills, which he fumbled meditatively, much as though he had never seen them before.

Behind him was a telephone; also a row of shelves on which were hideous things. In between was a counter, topped with glass, through which I could see brooches, bracelets, rings—the lamentable tokens of disastrous days. Beyond, at the rear of the shop, a man bent heavily over an enormous ledger. Without was the roar of the Bowery; within an odor of camphor. At my elbow was the telephone book, and be-

fore me the pawnbroker, a sinister and sinewy brute.

"I haven't quite got it," he suddenly exclaimed.

He turned, put the watch and case on a shelf, took the receiver from the hook, and, after a moment, called: "Three thousand one hundred, Spring."

"Three thousand one hundred, Spring?" he presently resumed. "This is Alfred Cohen. Yes. Send Jakey with change for a hundred. What? Sure! Shake a foot."

With that, he replaced the receiver, turned again, and threw out: "Fine day!"

"Very," I threw back.

Then indifferently, as though for the mere distraction of it, I took up the telephone book, and opened it, haphazard, in the middle. I had hit the mark, though. There it was: "Police Headquarters, 3100 Spring." I turned the page, flipped at another, closed the book, put it down, and dropped into the obvious:

"What would we do without telephones?"

Mr. Cohen gurgled appreciatively:

"There you are!"

"Or," I continued, "without cigars?" While we are waiting for Jakey, I'll go and get one." Ingratiatingly I added: "I'll get two."

As I spoke, I turned. Before me, through the grating and glass of the door, came the glitter of the street, the shriek of trains, the grunt of cars, the shapes of passers—instantly effaced.

Between me and the door was Mr. Cohen. He had vaulted the counter, and at the moment was calling over-loudly, I thought, to the man with the ledger.

"You be quiet," he oddly admonished me. "Here," he interrupted himself to bawl over my head, "this feller's wanted."

I turned again. From the rear of the shop there had sprung a creature who more nearly resembled a gorilla than any human being I had ever seen.

Unconcernedly I nodded.

"How do do?" Then, rising to his level, I added: "Our friend here seems to have got them again."

"I've got you!" I heard Cohen retort.

But at once, so far as I was concerned, he and the gorilla ceased to exist. I was concerned only that now at last I was in for it, and the consciousness brought that sense of curious relief which I suppose is known only to those who, like me, have been "wanted," and who, in consequence, have been obliged to turn and twist, to walk in silence and in secret ways, to feel always that they are hunted.

That is the way I had felt, and so acutely that now, the end of my tether reached, I forgot that Cohen and the other brute existed. But to such an indignity they must have refused to submit. I heard them talking—calling, rather—at each other in German; but their greasy gutturals were as unheeded by me as was the slam bang of the elevated.

That which finally aroused me was the entrance of Jakey—two men; one slim, in plain clothes; the other fat, and in uniform. The latter, a billy pendant but probably prompt in his hand, marched up and put his other hand on my shoulder. As he did so, I noticed the ledger fiend slinking, with an air of abasement, away, and it occurred to me that his conscience was not, perhaps, all that it might be.

"When no man pursueth!" I flung at his retreating back; but he squirmed, dodged, vanished.

At this the plain-clothes man, who

had been talking with Cohen in an open, unaffected, and very uncomplimentary manner about me, sidled suddenly up, ran his hands over me, found that I was unarmed, and said—and nicely enough: "You'll go quietly?"

I smiled at him.

"Dear me! I hate a fuss as much as you do; perhaps even more. But would it be indiscreet of me to ask where I am going?"

He smiled back at me. "It would not be indiscreet; it would be excessive. You know."

Well, as for that, he was right; and during the immediate and brief promenade to headquarters I said nothing further, except to ask for a cigarette from that case which, with the watch, Cohen had turned over to him. He obligingly gave it to me, flattering me as he did so by saying: "I like your nerve."

But as we were entering the building I again spoke to him:

"I must have an attorney, you know, and I will have to get bail."

He nodded.

"You'll get an attorney in court fast enough. This, though, is not a bailable matter."

"Nonsense!" I exclaimed. "There is only one of that kind."

"And that's yours."

The reply sent a shudder through me. Robbery—yes, I had expected that; but murder! At the moment I felt that no one had ever known what horror is—that I alone knew. But I have at least a modicum of common sense, and it surged at once to my rescue. Often I have told myself—and others—that it is stupid to be afraid of anything, no matter what, except danger, damp sheets, and one's own misdeeds. I told myself so then. In the telling I reflected that while, after all, I may have murdered a tune or two, yet otherwise—no, they might hold me, but never could they keep me on any such charge.

Further meditations were for the moment interrupted. Between the two men, one of whom still had a hand on my shoulder, I had marched along a hall, and was now taken into a room

where sat one of the finest—a good-looking chap, with alert eyes and a drooping mustache.

"We've got him, inspector!" said my friend in plain clothes. In the restrained idiom of the street, he added: "And with the goods on."

In speaking, he produced the watch and cigarette case, which the inspector, with a curious smile, examined.

Abruptly he looked up at me. The smile had gone.

"Where did you get these things?"

I was about to tell him I had forgotten; but, rallying, I answered:

"They were given me."

At that, point-blank, he fired:

"By Kenneth Mar?"

I dodged it:

"No, not by Kenneth Mar."

Before firing again, he pursed his lips.

"You knew him, though?"

I shrugged my free shoulder.

"Slightly."

For a second he seemed to be taking that in; then at once, without warning, he shot out:

"What did you do with the body?"

At this explosion I started.

"Nothing whatever. What should I have done with it? Why do you ask?"

He helped himself, coolly enough, I thought, to a cigarette from that case, lighted it contemplatively, nodded, and said:

"I'll tell you." He paused, inhaled the smoke, blew it, and added: "A week ago to-day, Kenneth Mar escorted a young woman to her home. He went to the door with her, waited until it was opened, went away, passed an acquaintance, who saw him approach an apartment house in which he lived, and which was a bit beyond. But that house Mar never entered. No one has seen Mar since. On the day when he disappeared, the young woman whom he took to her home knew that he had that case and that watch with him. In that watch is her own picture. Where did you get it? Answer me!"

It was rather a volley, but I faced it.

"Really, inspector, I shall have to throw myself on your indulgence. I

have a very poor memory—particularly for anything important—and I can only assure you that—that—"

He cut me short:

"Where have you been living these last few days?"

The unexpected twist pulled the truth out of me:

"Nine ninety-nine Great Jones Street."

At this, with that gravity which, even in serious matters, officials will display, he motioned at the policeman.

"Take him in there."

Immediately to the plain-clothes man he added:

"Telephone for Miss Faille."

In so ordering, he looked at me, to judge, perhaps, the effect of that name; and at once, as I turned to enter the room which he had indicated, I fell to thinking of this girl whom I knew Kenneth Mar had loved. Knowledge of that intimate fact was not confined to me. Everybody knew it—everybody, that is, who reads the papers; and for the past week the papers had dripped with this matter which the inspector had briefly resumed. But though the outlines, and particularly the headlines, of the mystery were familiar enough to all, yet the deeper mystery that was behind it was not solved until later; and then generally resolved itself into the verdict that Kenneth Mar was cracked.

A man in love usually is a bit off. In France, pathologists so ordinarily recognize the fact that they classify the condition as a disease induced by a fermentation of the molecules of the imagination. Assuming the diagnosis to be correct, necessarily there must exist a superinducing cause. In the present instance that cause was Janet Faille. The mere sight of her was headier than cups of champagne. At the risk of appearing extravagant—an appearance parenthetically for which I have no great dislike—I can compare her only to the first heroine of the first hexameters, that vision at sight of whose undreamed-of beauty the Trojans stopped, and stood, and mused.

A young person of such allurements is bound to have many suitors, and



Janet Faille had. Among the favored were Kenneth Mar and another man, who must have been a genius, for thus far he had managed to keep his name out of print.

Between the two Janet Faille had seemed to hesitate. Yet it may be that she seemed to only. In the depths of her delicate heart, perhaps she knew.

It was in these circumstances that the mystery occurred, and I, who, for my sins, had been instrumental in it hid in shabby lodgings until what money I had was gone, and I was forced into the disastrous visit to Cohen and his gorilla friend. Never in the world would I have gone to that shop, or to any other of the kind, had I known that descriptions of the watch and of the cigarette case had been sent about. The papers had supplied me with every variety of imaginable and unimaginable information concerning the matter; yet of these things not a word.

On the contrary, you were told that Kenneth Mar was not precisely a pauper; that he claimed to be a composer; that he was young, blue-eyed, dark-haired, without an enemy in the world or an idea in his head; in short, a nonentity with a few dollars in his pocket, who, on that account, may have been held up, knocked out, and otherwise disposed of. Or, if not, then that he must have developed a secondary personality, lost all knowledge of who he really was, and would ultimately be discovered in the guise of a dairymaid on a Kansas farm, or as an eremite in a Harlem flat. These things, and more besides, the papers gave; but of the watch and cigarette case never a word. There was the trick that caught me.

Meanwhile, from the outer room there had been filtering the sound of voices and of brief, unemphasized commands. If I heard, I did not heed. Engrossed as I was in that trick, I had forgotten even the presence of the fat policeman, who sat beside me—a club in one hand, my arm in the other.

But now my attention veered. Before me over the open door was a painting of a girl, the mediocre copy of an inferior daub which, years before, I

had seen in the Paris Salon. At the thought of that jungle, of its mile after mile of improbable nymphs and vaselined landscapes, ardently I wished myself back there. Two hours of it, succeeded by massage, was, I knew, excellent for obesity. No doubt a bicycle is better, but that is no longer modish, and I told myself there should be something for every taste, however infastidious.

Again I looked at the painting. In spite of the sin of it, it suggested somebody—but whom? Then suddenly I knew, for as suddenly I heard her. In those accents which certain sections of Fifth Avenue share with Mayfair, Janet Faille was talking to the inspector.

I started. But that hand on my shoulder gripped me. The prompt billy had jumped.

"No," I heard her say, "it is not an inconvenience. I had intended coming. When I last saw you I was not entirely frank."

"And you will be so now, Miss Faille?" I heard the inspector interject, and interject, moreover, in a tone so different from that in which he had spoken to me that I wondered could he be a ventriloquist. But, then, beauty is a great emollient.

"I told you," the girl was saying, "that I had no theory. That was untrue. But though I did have one, you will, perhaps, appreciate why I did not mention it. You know that Mr. Mar was—well, that he admired me."

"He would have been blind if he had not," that man threw in.

"But what you do not know," the girl resumed, "is that I cared for him also. Oh, very, very much more than he knew—far more than I let him imagine. I was even guilty of trying to get him to think that I was interested elsewhere, when I was not—not in the very least, believe me."

I could not see her tears, but it seemed to me I heard them. Yet presently, with a tremor in that voice of silk, the tale continued, and, though I could not see, I could fancy her two hands crushed together.

"Well, that last afternoon, when he took me home——"

"Permit me," the inspector interrupted. "The other man—the one whom you seemed to favor—have you seen him since?"

"No, no—nor shall I ever again."

"Do you know where he is?"

"No, nor do I want to."

"What is he like?"

"Tall and dark, with regular features."

At this the policeman beside me turned. He was looking me over.

Meanwhile, that voice which I have compared to silk became like a thread snapped swiftly. There was silence in the outer room—yet a silence that was punctuated soon by little sobs, by little, herculean efforts to arrest them.

"I wish I were dead!" she at last cried out. "It was I who killed him."

"Miss Faille!" the inspector protested.

"Yes. At first I thought he had gone away to try me, to see if in his absence I would not give some sign to show—to show—— And now! Is it not clear that, since you have those things of his, he must have killed himself, and that it was I who drove him to it?"

After the logic of that again for a moment there was silence. Then, with the customary combination of platitude and imagination, the inspector went at it:

"You see, Miss Faille, in matters of this kind the obvious is very misleading. The person from whom we got this watch and cigarette case has been hiding in Great Jones Street. I have sent to the place, and I find that he took lodgings there shortly after Mar's disappearance. I find, too, that, except at night, and except to-day, when we

got him, always he remained locked in his room."

Once more there was a sob, the effort to subdue it, another little cry:

"He must have—— Oh, he must have found Kenneth, and robbed him. Don't you think so?"

"If he did, he found him before he was lost. But everything is possible. It is possible, for instance, that the man whom you seemed to favor, but who doubtless knew that in reality you preferred Mar, did away with him for that very reason, and then, that the crime might be attributed to a footpad, pocketed his valuables. That is usual, but what is usual, also, once the crime committed, he lost his nerve, and ran to cover."

"What a Solomon!" I thought.

"Here!" I heard the inspector call. "Bring the suspect in here."

In a moment I was before them—before the inspector, rather, for Janet's back was toward me.

Slowly she turned; her deep eyes widened, her mouth half opened, closed, opened again; with a little bleat, she started to me, while, from over her shoulder, she called:

"This is Kenneth Mar!"

I would have laughed. I knew that what she said was true; knew that she was, also; knew, too, that I had hidden away for the very reason she stated, in order that some sign of hers might show whether she cared for me or for another.

I would have laughed, I say. But I was only just in time to catch her. She had fainted.

It was from sheer joy, she later told me. Yet even now I scarcely dare believe it.





**I**N the padre's ancient church, above the chasm road, a golden sunrise crept and kindled. It preceded the earliest of Terrassa's sons and daughters on their most exciting day since the visit of the torcador. It was a September sunrise, irradiate with a sustaining warmth that circled around the gradual hill and broke into drifting bits the cold night mist that slept, like a long dragon, with its nose in the chasm, twisting itself backward toward the great curtain of the Pyrenees. Mysterious and lavender-capped, one purple mountain out-guard rose in the distance behind Terrassa, beheaded by eternal white winter from June to June again.

As its gray, and lavender, and crowning white shimmered out from its melting nightdress, showing its gaunt lines softened and shifting, the molten sun rays advanced like an army in the small house of prayer. They inflamed more than half its mellow walls. They bathed its altar, spired with quietly burning tapers and weighted with tribute of red-and-yellow poppies, as in liquid cloth of gold. In their light, Violeta, the most beautiful girl in the village, was being married to Toninio, Terrassa's only true-born son with yellow hair.

Before them, unable to see his book through the silver gathering and glinting in his vision, the padre stood, and behind them Margarita, the pale bride's foster sister, her dusky diamond eyes alight and her right arm flowing over

with yellow roses, forced in her own small hothouse against the famous marriage.

Beside them was Ugly Rosa, she who had given breast to both these lovely women, with now her black eyes snapping below hair as cold and shining as the mountaintop, out of a soul as near to heaven; while thirty small male children sent their voices thitherward in a hundred times "Ave Maria."

Violeta and Toninio went down to the chasm road, and along it toward the distant purple, leaving the motley-hued crowd of townsfolk grouped before the church. The thirty young boys danced before them as far as the last house back of the descending hill, singing on—but now an earthly song, as tinkling as a tambourine, and full of the red rhythms of the tarantella—made by Valverde, indeed, and sung in the play at Madrid.

Drinking wine at this last dwelling place, and leaving there the padre's thirty sons, Toninio and his wife went onward through the chasm in a tidy cart, driving their donkey very gently through the deep shadows that lay under the remaining shreds of morning haze; nor did they speak at all until they had come to a pilgrims' box, deep sunk in moss high up above the roadside, where Maria, the pink of her cheeks and the blue of her robe near washed away by many rains, held out her son's bleeding wooden heart. Here, climbing the steep embankment with her hus-

band's aid, Violeta sacrificed, upon the weather-beaten hands, her wreath of orange-tree blossoms. These, too, were from her foster sister's little house of greens, that had the glass windows for a roof.

"Oh, my Toninio—esposito!" she said, turning from them with a long breath like a sigh. "Here we leave youth! In this place, if our marriage be blighted, I would die! Or, if it prosper, here may I end old age! For here youth ends!"

He took both of her hands in his, and for the first time on their nuptial day looked full into her wide, strange, violet eyes.

"Esposito," he answered, "my little, little wife, has not the padre told us: 'Here life begins?'"

Terassa stretched up and onward round the waving hillside, and her square, beribboned market place, shining proudly in the center, topped like a festive hat the sloping, trim-cut vineyards. Down below, the padre's flowering Fields of Industry painted the skirts of fair Terassa with colors quite as gay, albeit Ugly Rosa's small dwelling, on the opposite side of the sunny road, bore an humbler aspect, more as in the days before the prospering times of Padre Pedro.

Just as Ugly Rosa, carrying her name for her truth-telling tongue and not for her wrinkled face, was the padre's favorite townswoman, so his Fields of Industry were his favorite pastime; and to their furtherance he devoted his children, all thirty of them, and also his chosen of all mankind—Toninio, with the laughing mouth, and olive skin, and yellow hair.

They were fields of industry in truth, but only in the moderate hours of the daytime; whereas at night they were of sleepy flowers: interchanging rows of red and yellow poppies, that rested from their tending in the noontide hours also, that they might drink the golden sun rays down into their stems until the canopies were hung again, and the padre's thirty sons, with Toninio alternately grave and gay, came once more

among them with watering can, and scissors, and trowel.

Of the padre's busy children some were twelve years old, and some were only eleven, or ten; and one was barely nine. This was Tito, for he had seemed to the padre so small and motherless that he had named him after Titus, who had suffered, like Maria's son, on a cross. They were orphans, Ruby said; but Terassa did not call them so, for that which had taken off their parents had given back to them a mother and father rolled favorably into one—one with the face of a generous man, and skirts to cling to as to those of a kindly woman, and, above both, the hat of a beneficent priest.

This morning was the last before Terassa's day of coming history—the long-struggled-for first day of her first Wine Festival. The thirty little boys were at prolonged instruction in the padre's house by the church on the chasm road, and Toninio was alone in the poppy fields, leisurely stretching the three-striped canopies; one sloping from the wall over the violet beds to the statue of Santo Miguel, where it hitched, by a ring, to his spear; one from two tall sticks to the acacia tree; one, on four stark poles, along the road; and Toninio did this with little effort, for he was now so skillful that when the padre's sons were come under the last canopy, he could lift the roadside canvas on all its props intact, and carry it on for them to the third succeeding space.

"What say you to that?" the Padre Pedro would ask of the Inglese, or of other travelers. "Has Sweden, or, I may say, America, such progeny in its littler towns, with youth and unusual beauty, and skill thrown into the bargain? And then, *amigos*, through and above all, a pure heart? See his yellow head! Mark it, here among our dark-haired nation, and presently I will point to you out his wife, the most beautiful woman in Terassa, who is like the lovely night, when I hope you pray, good strangers. Tell me, as man to man, or man to his confessor, have you such beauty, and such industry, and to boot,

such marriages, in your Russia, or Ohio?"

And even those who smiled were drawn into his reverence for God's workmanship when he called over Toninio for surveyance, and they looked, for themselves, upon his yellow hair, and olive skin, and clear green eyes.

Far down the winding road, where it curved toward Ruby in the way to distant Barcelona, faint dust rose into the morning air, and Toninio, watching from under the last canopy, speculated whether there should be travelers, or wine merchants, or jealous citizens from Ruby. A half of an hour would tell, perhaps a quarter of an hour.

"Toninio!" called a voice. "Toninio!"

Old Rosa, erect and straight as her long toll of years, stood in the warped gray doorway of her house, and was summoning him severely from across the road. Toninio stepped, with his lithe and swinging gait, to the edge of the red and yellow field, and smiled at Madre Rosa while she spoke at him.

"Are you a pagan? Or a gentleman, perhaps? Are you a rich man from Barcelona? Shall you wait for the children and stand idle meanwhile? Shall you watch the dustclouds and not remember that visitors will need wine? And do you think I am so young that I can lift a new keg myself? Shall cruelty grow with yellow hair?"

"Why not tell your need, to begin, and my sins to follow?" asked Toninio, laughing, with his hands spread out. "I could have lifted your wine while you scolded!"

Crossing to her house, he entered, and brought out a keg of festival wine to the table before the door, filled her bottle for her, and set it beside the keg.

"Now shall I fetch the strangers, madre, and open their mouths, and pour the wine down, and, if God will, become sick for them?"

Old Rosa, kissing her palms, boxed his ears with them; and Toninio, dodging and laughing, ran back across the road.

Toward Barcelona, the world was motionless. The cloud of dust had dis-

appeared behind a distant hill. Toninio stood idle among the waiting poppies. Old Rosa pinned a square of lace upon a pillow, and raveled out a length of faulty thread. Up in Terrassa, out of the vineyard, stretching to the church, Padre Pedro came behind his drove of sons, urging them slowly before him like a swarm of bees between the low gray walls of the descending highway.

When the pupils were dispersed, scampering but orderly, in the shade of the drooping canopies, Padre Pedro, in a sonorous voice, but sweet, catechized them:

"What has a poet of the English called the red poppies, in the language of poets?"

And they answered correctly in chorus:

"He has called them 'great red bubbles of blood.'"

"And what have we ourselves named the yellow poppies, and where are they grown for evil ends, as well as good?"

"We have named them 'golden chalices,' to hold the blood; and they grow for bad ends in Asia."

"And for good ones, too," cautioned the padre. "And, after God, to what shall we dedicate them?"

They shouted the answer: "To our country—the red-and-yellow flag of Spain!"

"Right. Work well to-day, for with sundown comes Terrassa's holiday for seven days; and when the stars come out, it must be to see our finest flowers in patterns about the dancing green in the square. Praise Maria, and obey Toninio!"

And Padre Pedro went to the other side of the road, where he sat down with Ugly Rosa on the doorstep of her house, and drew one of her arms under his, away from the lacework spread upon the pillow in her lap.

"So you have put out wine for the visitors," he said, noting the table under her trellis of grapevines. "Can you be so rich, when you wear this dingy gown? Is it for some sin that yours is the first house on the road to Terrassa, so that you slake thirsts to the benefit of dwellers farther on? You shall have

a dress of white muslin from Barcelona, out of the poppy money, else I will reprove you in the public square."

Old Rosa withdrew her arm from the padre's gentle hold, and put it at work again on her lace.

"At fifty, even a priest should talk sense," she answered sharply. "At seventy, I may tell you so."

The padre laughed.

"For punishment of disrespect," he said, "you shall have no muslin gown, but a linen one, with a border of roses in pink thread. So be it. Now," he added, in a more practical tone, "what is the news?"

"It is no news that you spoil Toninio."

"You evade," said Padre Pedro. "Therefore you have news—the first in fourteen days."

"You yourself have told Terassa not to gossip."

"You evade again. Therefore your news is bad. You are not Terassa—you are a cross and godly woman. You help me to guide my chosen flock. What is your news?"

Old Rosa paused in her work, and glanced at him swiftly with her jet-black eyes.

"Violeta weeps," she said, and, looking back at her pillow, pulled at her lace once more.

The padre lifted his eyebrows.

"Do not all women weep?" he asked.

"From time to time, but not for seven days."

"Why does she weep?"

"Should I know? Ask Toninio."

"I ask you. Why should Violeta weep?"

"Ask Violeta."

"I shall ask her. But do you not know more than you tell?"

"I know nothing—you yourself have often said so."

"Then this is all your news: 'Violeta weeps!'"

"I might add, if I chose, 'Margarita laughs.'"

"So you might, but it would not be news. Are you a poet, that you put facts in a scale to make them balance?

Margarita is young and beautiful—and unmarried. Should she not laugh? Why do you say it, then?"

Rosa, dropping her thread, put her forefinger down upon the padre's knee.

"Because there is an old saying: 'When one woman weeps, and one woman laughs, there is arithmetic somewhere.'"

"You gossip," said the padre testily. "Have I not warned you against old sayings?"

"Do I squawk any that are older than the Book?" demanded Ugly Rosa. "Have I a blue face, that I should smile like the sky, and have I teeth as white as clouds, to grin with like your Toninio, when his wife weeps, and her foster sister laughs? Were they not your first orphans? Did I not suckle them for you? Did not Violeta grow up to do her tasks, and did not Margarita choose to seek out her drab of an aunt in Barcelona, and take her beatings, and become a flower girl on the Long White Street, and run back here when she grew tired? Did not Violeta grow up so docile and so good that you thought her worthy enough—and beautiful, too—to marry your money-haired Toninio? Did not Violeta, while she lay clinging at my breast, drink in the green and white complexion of my very face, and two times the size of my eyes from their sockets? And did not Margarita, with all her soft and pretty skin, kick at her sister with her silky legs, and squeak like a little pink pig?"

"Tut," said the padre, "be polite! Here are strangers!"

From the Barcelona road the dust was rising in many places, and Padre Pedro and old Rosa welcomed the first come of the wayfarers. The padre gave them "health and wealth," and, discovering them to be foreigners, fetched Toninio to show them how to drink the Spanish wine; lifting the bottle and taking what you will without a cup, yet without putting the bottle to the lips, and withal not losing a mere drop; and the travelers, laughing, thankfully took old Rosa's proffered china mug, and drank from that, and journeyed on into Terassa.



"Why *should* she weep?" asked the padre, as the two sat down again.

"Why, indeed?" said Rosa. "I will say nothing. Have you not told me to be polite? I will ask questions, like you. Is she not the most beautiful woman in the village? Is she not prosperous? Is she not admired? Did she not, from an orphan, come to be an envied girl, mothered by a virile woman and fathered by a priest? Was she not asked in marriage by your paragon, the only boy in twenty towns with yellow hair? Is not her wedding day a year ago to-morrow, and is not to-morrow Terassa's day of history? Why should she weep, indeed? Should you not ask her husband? Can any one else know? Why do you not beat him? When Violeta weeps, why do you not beat Toninio?"

"Beat Toninio?" Padre Pedro gazed at her with startled eyes.

"Why not?" asked Rosa. "Did you not beat José, a boy of twelve years old, less than three months ago?"

"I did," said the padre, "and he was a beloved one of my thirty. Do you think I did not pray before, and afterward? Do you not know his fault? Do you know that he broke Violeta's yearling plum tree, with the one great purple plum on it? Did you know that he wantonly broke off the little branch?" The padre spoke with vehemence, and looked at her reproachfully.

"Was her *heart* on the branch?" she asked, rising.

Again they gave wine to pilgrims from the road—a merchant from Madrid, with a supercilious air, but with deprecatory manners; a group of peasants from Ruby, dressed out in scarlet, who drank old Rosa's wine as Toninio did; and a very old man who came afoot, albeit he owned a donkey, which he led on by a rope, and which, in turn, dragged forward a lowly cart, heavy and high-piled with canvas-covered merchandise.

Courtesy and fair greetings met the merchants and the citizens of Ruby, but Padre Pedro, to this lean old man, showed a less hearty welcome, giving him only "health."

"If you are honest," he said, standing before him in the roadway, "partake of the wine, and may you thrive in our festival. What have you brought to Terassa in your cart?"

The old man bowed low before the padre.

"Toys, my honored one," he said, in cracked and humiliated tones. "Toys, my padre, toys! And my booth, in which I do sleight of hand."

"Are you a magician?" demanded the padre.

"That also," said the old man, bowing again. "A magician of high rank, with testimonials from nobility and gentle folk. And I am honest. I sell toys, and my toys are as fine as German toys, and the fortunes I tell come true. I am very honest, padre, and I give for what I take."

"Then take the wine, and give praise to Maria," said the padre, stepping aside. "Go choose your place in the square. But keep in mind that Terassa is a godly town, and try no kind of evil magic with your fortune tellings. I give my blessing to your toys; but if I find the devil in your cart, I will scourge you along with him out of town!"

He patted the mule on its pink and gray nose, and the old man, wiping the red wine from his withered face, took up his rope again, and walked slowly on.

The padre held out his hand to Rosa. "I will go to Violeta," he said, "for you say she weeps. As for Margarita, let her laugh. Is she not a good girl?"

"So far," said Rosa grimly.

"Tut, tut!" chided Padre Pedro. "Have a care, or I will buy you a satin gown, with a lace jacket!" And he crossed the road, and called Toninio to him from the poppy fields.

"To-morrow is Festival Day, Toninio."

"Yes, padre."

"And your second wedding day, Toninio."

"Yes, padre."

"Let us thank God twice, then, you and I. Deserve your marriage, as Terassa does her festival. See that the children work happily, but hard—all the

plants must be ready and conveyed to the market place before the resting hour, and the patterns laid out there in two hours after it. All this will leave two and a half for reseeding in the empty trenches. Then, Toninio—think! If the weather is kind, we will have one more crop before winter, even without our hothouse! And next year——"

"Yes, padre."

"Well—work as hard as the sun allows. But remember that Tito is very small. If he wanders, do not call him back. Be as good as you are good to look at."

"Yes, padre."

"So you own your good looks. Are you vain?"

"No, padre."

"José is pulling up the pole, Toninio—run—run!" And, as Toninio gave chase to José, Padre Pedro walked toward Terassa along the burning road.

As he neared Violeta's garden around Toninio's house, its several colors pressed gratefulness and beauty upon his senses; house and garden both were square; the habitation was not alone of stones, but of masonry, as well; and the generous space about it, walled from the hillside vineyard with broken gray rock, was spread over with sharp contrasts of shade and sun—its close-cut velvet green all covered with golden spots, and tall shapes marked out in ebony black, with here or there a mottled place, from a tree with spreading branches. There was no breeze, and the silhouette of Violeta lay as motionless on the step as the shadows on the grass. She stood bareheaded, and the light brought a blue luster to her parted hair. Her eyes, which were known as far as Ruby to be one moment like the small wild violet, and the next as dark as those in Margarita's hothouse, were gazing past the vineyard to the poppy fields.

"Health!" said the padre cheerfully, coming up behind her. She started, for she had not heard him approach; she did not cry out; but she leaned against him rather weakly, and trembling, and, as though she could not, did not speak.

"My child," said the padre, lifting up her face and stroking her dark hair, "why have you been weeping? Your eyes are as clear and fair as the ocean one sees from Gibraltar, but they have also been as wet, and as salt. Have ships sunk in them? Have men been drowned? Is the Lost City about to rise? Then why have their depths been troubled?"

She hid her face against his shoulder, and, after a moment, said, in a low voice: "I am afraid!"

"Afraid of what?" he asked gently.

With a shuddering sigh, she breathed again: "I am afraid!"

"We must fear nothing but the devil. Then are your thoughts pure?"

She looked up into his face.

"Do you doubt that?"

"Then do not say you are afraid. Say you are unhappy."

"I am unhappy."

Padre Pedro slipped his arm about her waist as tenderly as if he were a young man and her lover, and drew her with him through the quiet garden.

"Are you not young, and well to do, and married?"

"Yes, padre."

They paused at a corner of the wall, and he pointed across at the house.

"Is it not a rare dwelling? Is masonry so cheap in little Terassa? Was not Toninio's portion extraordinary for a youth, and have you not used wise hands in saving? Do I not stand this moment in the example of Terassa's gardens? Are your sprouts and vineyards not envied, and are your ways not copied? Am I right?"

"Yes, padre."

He led her steps beyond the wall into the vineyard, and along a narrow confine beaten by the sun.

"See! Do not the grapes strike our faces? Is your head not hidden from the road, and would a passer-by know it was Padre Pedro rustling the leaves, save that his hat appears above them?"

They came back toward the garden, and, leaning against the wall, he parted the thick foliage from over a heavy cluster, and poised the rich fruit in his palm.

"See them, pale green, each with a red stain at the bottom! Has Ruby the like? Are they not pure Malaga?"

"Yes, padre."

"All these you have." He drew her nearer to him and looked into her eyes. "You say 'I am unhappy,' and all these you have!"

As he looked at her, a deep color came over her cheeks, and she lowered her eyes. She slowly drew her hands from his, and turned her back.

"I am unhappy," she repeated dully.

A troubled look passed over the padre's face, but when he spoke his voice was calm and even.

"All these you have, and first of all, Toninio. He loves you, and he is a good husband."

"He is my husband," she said.

"And he loves you."

"He loves me? Toninio loves me?"

Her great eyes searched his desperately.

With his strong hands, the padre suddenly lifted her to the wall, and, climbing over it himself, swung her down into the garden; but she did not smile as once she would have done. Her eyes had darkened, and, as she flashed them upon him, a smoldering passion leaped up in their deepening purple and devastated her pure beauty.

"What are they?" she cried, pointing at the vineyard, and the garden, and the house. "What is a vineyard? Could I not live without wine? What is a garden? Do I eat grass? What is a house? Could I not sleep under the stars?"

The padre looked down on her sternly.

"My daughter," he said, "thank God and Maria for what you have. Forget your vineyard, if you will. Forget your portion, and your house. You have a husband!"

She broke from him, and ran toward the step.

"I have nothing!" she cried abandonedly, and threw herself forward on the turf, her white wrists denting the grass.

"Esposito!" she moaned. "Esposito!"

He lifted her up, but she broke away from him again, and ran into the house.

As the padre plodded on toward the market square, a slight figure, walking very slowly, and stopping at each snakelike curve of the highway to lean over the wall at left or right, now peering into the chasm road, now over the sunlit valley, came gradually downward toward him.

"She is no taller than my hand," said Padre Pedro to himself. "Still, how tall she is grown! Yet she will not be tall."

She was standing at the next curve, her elbows on the wall and her chin upon her hands, gazing toward Ruby as if her fortune lay there; but she came presently and met him.

From her shoulders, falling over her linen dress and thrown back under her arms, hung a scarf of intricate white, with a black and silken fringe. There was no flower in her brown-black hair, but over her heart, like a ball of honey in a drift of snow, was a full-blown yellow rose; and surrounding her slim waist, like filigree disks of an artisan's tracery, was a circle, held by black ribbon, of blossoms of the lace flower. It was Margarita.

The padre smiled.

"Health! My daughter! Are you a rich lady from Castile that you carry your hands behind your back, or are they swollen and red from working?"

Margarita laughed. She held them forth in front of him, and they were as white and smooth as magnolia blossoms.

"They have made the best lace in the history of Terrassa, and brought to air the biggest roses. When the festival is over, I can buy another greenhouse."

The padre looked at her thoughtfully.

"I cannot call you lazy," he said.

"But I can call you—light. Shall you put *everything* behind you? Is it thrifty—and that on the day before the festival—to put the best of your best lace on your back?"

"The best," said Margarita, tilting her head to one side, and laying one of the fair hands on the lace flowers at her waist, "is here, in front."

"I might," said the padre slowly, "even call you bold."

"Why not?" asked Margarita, bowing low. "A priest should tell the truth!"

"Tut!" said Padre Pedro severely. "You were bold, and you quibbled, too, for you did not make the lace flowers. They grow only in the chasm. They are what the English call Queen Anne's lace, and the Americans wild carrot. I would have your character as fine-woven as this flower. I would have it fit your name, like Violeta's. Do you know the meaning of your name? It is that of a jewel, as smooth as your finger, and as round and white."

Margarita laughed again.

"You did not name me, like Violeta, after my eyes—I am not called 'Piece of Coal.' My name came to you with me, and is not your fault or mine. So because I bear it, should I sit still in an oyster?"

"Would you call Terassa an oyster?"

"It shuts its jaws on me like one."

"Will you make me angry?" cried the padre; but his harsh look did not terrify her, and, standing swiftly upon her toes, she clicked her fan open behind her head, and danced impudently past him with the likewise opening steps of the tarantella.

"Stop!" he called. "I will scold no more. Where are you going?"

"I go to sing for Toninio, while he works."

"Do not. He will not work if you sing."

"Then I will show the littlest boys how to put in the seeds."

"I forbid you. They will work better alone."

"I will help old Rosa with the last of her festival lace."

"Do that," said the padre, and he went onward to the village.

Margarita ran for a space, and then, smoothing her limpid shawl, went slowly, until she came between the poppy fields and Ugly Rosa's house. Rosa was nodding as though asleep, and Margarita crossed to the edge of the fields.

"Toninio!" she called softly, and he came over to her, passing his sleeve across his brow. "Look at these flowers. It is near the resting hour—come

with me to the chasm, and I will show you where to find them."

Toninio shook his head, smiling.

"I may not," he said.

"They are lace flowers. They are what the stupid English call Queen Anne's lace, and the crazy Americans wild carrots. Come, and I will show you where to find some for Violeta."

Again Toninio shook his head.

"Not for Violeta?"

"I must not."

"Then I will give you these," said Margarita, and she held them out to him one by one, so that when all were given, her hand had touched his fingers twenty times.

At evening, the padre once more greeted Ugly Rosa.

"So Margarita helped you with your lace to-day!"

He spoke triumphantly, his hands upon his hips.

Old Rosa duplicated his posture.

"Shall a priest make jests?" she asked. "Margarita talked with Toninio, and wiped his pretty brow for him, and then went down the road, and made herself acquainted with the strangers as they came, and invited them to partake of my wine, and spent it for me as if it were her own, and wiped Toninio's brow again, and went down the road for more strangers!"

"Tut," said the padre, "you well deserve your name!"

He left Rosa, and with no more words walked across to the poppy field, and beckoned Toninio to him.

"Toninio, you are a prosperous and fortunate man."

"Yes, padre." And for a time they were silent.

"Antonio," said the padre then, "tell me the truth. Are you still, as of old, my Toninio?"

Toninio looked down at the ground. When he looked up again there was color in his cheeks, and he said:

"But, padre, am I not now a man?"

Padre Pedro gazed at him searchingly.

"Are you a good man, Toninio?"

"Yes—padre," said Toninio, at last.

But his eyes were lowered once more, and he did not meet the padre's glance again.

Together they drove the little boys home to supper, as the sun faded away on the eve of their first wine festival, and from the day when, softly as clouds from the Pyrenees, the Love Smoke drifted into beautiful Terassa.

The festival had begun. A wide green, bordered with a deep pattern of flag-colored poppies, reared and transplanted by the little boys as their tribute to the holiday, filled the village square from side to side, and from the market to the fonda. Flowers twisted among vine leaves spanned, in long ropes, the approach from the highway and the curving street that led to the chasm road, and exuberant festoons of intermingled grapes and olive branches hung looping from house to house throughout the middle of the town. Poles stood up from the edges of the green, holding aloft wide ribbons, these, like the poppies, in red and yellow colors; and the tallest, rising before the veranda of the inn, upheld a tambourine, strung with coins, as a climbing prize.

When the padre came into the square before the luncheon hour, it was vibrant with noise and with people, and already, considering the crowds of valuable foreigners, Terassa had raised above her streets the midday canopies, to shield the unwary from God's roundest yellow ball. In the center of the farther side, as though struck off by a foot rule from the inn and the market, was the magician's booth. Its arch of wood was painted like a theater, and miniature boxes hung out from the sides, with dolls on china chairs within. Three marionetti, French Pierrot, and French Pierrette, and, in between, a baboon, with the old man's head bobbing, with glistening eyes, behind them, depended in the open space, to be played, for nothing, once an hour, by fine cords—not on clashing rods, as at Naples. Below where they dangled, the counter was piled high with many-hued, fanciful objects, while the top displayed, in

a flaring row, small flags of all the nations.

Wine was drunk before the shops, where it was free, and as prodigally at the inn, where it was paid for. Musicians seated on the green threw forth dance melodies when those at the inn paused, and shouts and singing waved back around the hill. As the padre cast his eyes about the square, a cheer arose, mixed with laughter and applause. Toninio had slid down the pole, and stood at the base of it, beating the tambourine against his thighs. Margarita ran toward him from the crowd, clapping her hands, and the padre looked about for Violeta; but suddenly he was surrounded, as from out of the ground, and borne onward, almost off of his feet, by a screaming, jumping throng—an army of thirty, up since faint daybreak, and clamoring for their silver coins. On they rushed around the square, his large black figure rising like some funeral decoration in their midst, till, in front of the festive booth, he was felled nearly to the ground.

"Tut!" cried the padre, scrambling up. "Would you scatter the coins? Be gentle! Here they are."

As the day wore on, even the distant mountain had thrown off its misty draperies, and rose as blue as a bird against the far horizon. All duties had ceased in Terassa save the padre's. He went all about—everywhere—as on another day, with cheerful words to the old, and marked this occasion by carrying garlands to the sick or feeble who could not join the merrymaking. His heart swelled with pride in his village. The yellow-green vineyards, far and near, were dotted by the dark costumes of foreign merchants, who walked through them, studying, admiring; and ever from the square came laughter, the clink of tambourines, singing.

But as he repassed the inn in the waning of the languid heat toward the sundown, a slight shadow passed into his happy looks, and a cloud, intangible as an imagined wrong, came upon his spirit.

He had paused to greet Juanita, who

was sitting with a stranger at a table before the inn. She was a pretty child, as black as the ace of spades, and forever dressed out as red as the queen of hearts, as essential of her country as her common name, or the flag itself. Indeed, she fluttered and flaunted as if always in a high wind of her own, and was one of his favorites, for all her intertwined goodness and badness. He thought no evil of her companioning with an unknown friend, nor of the two great bottles on their table; nor at first, for that matter, of her boisterous laughter; but as he stood by the railing, with his affectionate smile and a gay word at his lips, she looked at him, and she did not speak to him.

The padre stared. She looked away again, and the two continued laughing—foolishly, hysterically, as though at a booby show. A chill, unexperienced, inexplicable, clutched like an unseen hand upon his heart. *Juanita did not know him.* And in his dazed confusion he walked away.

He trod slowly, and some one who could go no faster was keeping pace with him.

"Do you not know me?" asked old Rosa tartly.

The padre blushed at his neglectfulness, but his tongue did not desert him.

"In such a gown?" he asked. "I thought you were a young girl, and a stranger. You have revived all the glories of Castile to prevent my purchasing that satin gown and to keep your sharp tongue to boot."

"A sharp tongue is better than a thick one!" snapped Rosa, pointing back at the laughing Juanita; and she added, looking narrowly at the troubled priest: "Is your fine festival a wise one, after all?"

At the accusation, the padre's face cleared as though by magic.

"Tut!" he said. "Let her be merry. There is a French saying: 'Evil to him who——' But never mind. You were born cross."

And the padre hastened from her reply, and through the crowds to the square.

*What had there been in Juanita's*

*laugh?* It sounded in his ears again, as if it had come after him unaltered among the buzzing voices of the throng. In troubled reverie, he threaded his way slowly about till he found himself standing once more by the magician's booth. It was closed. It had been set up in front of a shop which the old man had hired, and in which he lodged. He must be at some business within, for the booth's rolling curtain had been pulled down to shut away his merchandise. The shop door opened and swung to, and a familiar figure ran impetuously into the street.

"Whither, and why so fast?" cried the padre, catching her.

Margarita struggled in his grasp like a thwarted child.

"Will you scold again?" she demanded. "Will you always tease?"

"Tut! Be a polite child. There is something wrong with your eyes. What have you hidden in your gown?"

"My hand. Is that wrong?" And she unclasped her palm.

"What were you doing in the shop?"

"I had my fortune told."

The padre released her.

"And what did the wizard promise you?"

She laughed, her eyes sparkling.

"I shall have my lover."

"And who is that?"

"The one I love."

"And who may that be? A king? A prince? An American?"

Her looks darkened, and, lifting her head high, she stamped her foot.

"Will you make sport of me till the day I die? Is love a joking matter? *Né-zaire!*"

The padre smiled at her proud anger.

"Would you frighten me with one foreign word?"

"Sport, and more sport!" she cried, clutching the rose at her waist. "Can I not pronounce the English? 'Gooth mornick. Suth preety ice! Gooth nigh.' Can I not pronounce it?"

The padre laughed, and she stamped her foot again in her vexation.

"Did I not live for a year in Barcelona to see the world, and sell my flow-



ers in the street like a pauper, that I might talk to foreigners? Did I not serve my aunt, and take her beatings?"

The padre's smile faded as her anger grew real in her eyes and voice.

"Then should I live in little Terassa and have no pleasure? Shall the holy church condemn an orphan to sadness and poor clothes while she pays her keep? Till she is a debtor to the church, or to the vineyard, or to the storekeepers of bread and fish, shall she not work as she choose, and dance as she choose? Till she is a debtor to the Virgin, shall she not love as she choose?"

And, with a quick whirl of her skirts, she was gone from him, and running across the green, her pretty fingers, fiercely clenched, hanging like hard pink rosebuds from her swinging arms.

Half dazed, the padre passed over the narrow street, and stood among the people. A breeze from the valley rustled up through the long vineyards, seeming to bear the sound to him again; and once more, from the street beyond the fishmonger's. Yes, it was real; and abruptly, over against the corner of the lace maker's, a man's face and a woman's, each with two shining eyes, brought the cold hand again upon his heart.

"What has come into Terassa?" he whispered, his lips moving, to himself.

There was a stir in the crowd around him. The unwearied players had burst into a cadence that throbbed back across his mind from Violeta's wedding day—the Valverde dance. Eager heads craned forward toward the evening gold of the tripping green, and the padre gazed with the others. A patter of anticipatory clapping ran around the edges of the square, and foreign voices rose here and there in the quiet that had fallen.

"Look at her!" said one. And "Look at him!" another.

Toninio and Margarita were dancing the tarantella.

It is a beautiful dance, as even a foreigner could see, and Toninio was as graceful and scintillant as a silver ball in the hands of a juggler. He

used his coin-strung tamborine, smarting it against knee and thigh and elbow; and Margarita, blowing forward and backward as light as a dandelion down in the puff of air, struck her hands together, when they were not knuckled on her hips or clasped behind her neck, like cymbals, and, pirouetting toward him as the music reached its height, she caught the gleaming trophy on her head.

But the padre's eyes had drawn away to the outskirts of the crowd, to fall upon a desolate, slim figure. Watching, unnoticed, lonesome as a violet in autumn, Toninio's wife was standing in the square.

A rush of strange feeling swept the hand of ice away from his heart, and suddenly the padre did an unheard-of thing. Going quickly up to her, he swept off his hat, and addressed her banteringly:

"What! You, who danced like a cobweb in a tree—you are not on the green? Is your wedding day twenty years ago? Come—we will outdo them! We may be old, but we are spry!"

And Terassa and her guests saw the padre and Violeta dance the tarantella.

His long black frock thrown by, his hat for a tambourine, and the lithe girl reaching and clapping her hands, or weaving them in the dark mass of her helplessly fallen hair, they danced at cross sides to Toninio and his gypsy. He felt as agile, as full of giddy strength, as when he had been a youth in Barcelona; and Violeta, dancing opposite him, wore all the flushing loveliness of her spirited virgin days. Her undulant figure, lined out in her blue, ungauzy dress, waved toward him and away. Her eyes shone with excited brilliance through strands of her loosened hair, and her pale cheeks flared from their pallid white to the color of bought rouge, and back to white flame again. He did not take his eyes from off her face.

Violeta, then Margarita, bore the tambourine; Toninio, then the padre, crushed the hard substance of the stiff black hat. Voices swept round them in sympathetic laughter and hushed

cheers. As the music, crashing, vibrated into silence, the padre tossed Violeta to his shoulder, and then all the world seemed to be passing by. A shouting mob, foreigners and townsfolk alike, had swept them up, and were bearing them, on a wooden bench, through the streets to the top of Terrassa's hill.

As Toninio, panting, filled with astonishment and the tingling vigor of the dance, stared after the tumultuous sight, Margarita clashed the tambourine before his face.

"It is mine now!" she taunted. "You shall not have it again!"

Ringling it in the air, she dashed across the green, with Toninio laughing at her heels, and darted into the alley at the side of the fonda. Stopping there, she held it behind her back, and faced him impudently.

"It is mine," said Toninio. "Give it to me."

"Will you go to the chasm with me and pick lace flowers? You were unkind to me yesterday. Will you go now?"

"And miss the dancing?"

"There will be dancing till midnight. I will dance the tarantella with you then. Will I keep the tambourine, or will you do what I tell you?"

"I will do what you tell me."

"So! Here it is. Now, close your eyes, and smell this perfume. Throw back your head, and smell—deep. So!"

Lifting her hands, she snapped her fingers underneath his nostrils, and a vapor like night mist floated up from them. Sightless, obedient, Toninio breathed it in. His brain throbbed. The whole world seemed full of marching feet, and small hands, upraised, bearing Violeta and the padre far away from the village green. Unclosing his eyes, he could see, as in a great moonlit space, nothing but Margarita's face, close to his. Violeta, from the hilltop, saw them as they ran, jerking their long shadows behind them in the sunset, down through the chasm road.

While dusk settled into darkness,

Padre Pedro sat motionless in the worn portico of the church. From confusion, anxiety, the thrill of abandonment, and the return to formulated habit, his mind had conceived, rejected, reëmbaced one question: "Did I do wrong?" With the slow deepening of shadows, the answer more and more refined itself before his inner vision, and with the full coming of night he answered, with the great sigh of a burden shifted: "No!"

But there are sorrows poniarded as conscience, and questions not of his own making spelled themselves out to him, clear as printed letters across the blackened sky. "What was there in Juanita's laugh?" And old Rosa: "Is your fine festival a wise one, after all?" And Margarita: "Till I am a debtor to the Virgin, shall I not love as I choose?" Why had she asked that, flinging the words out like a reply to a charge of felony? What had come into Terrassa, after all these years? Why was she piled with defiance as she ran from the magician's shop? What had she hidden in her dress and lied about? As suddenly as he had turned and carried Violeta into the dance, the padre sprang to his feet and started from the church to the magician's booth.

The rolling shade was still shut down, and he rapped at the door of the silent shop. Inside, the old man was eating a stale supper made of bread and russet onions. Discovering his visitor, he was ill at ease; but the padre gave him "Health!" with an unaffrighting smile, and in more confidence the old man brought him forth a chair.

"I bespeak your best offices," said the padre. "To-day has brought thirty silver pieces from my pocket to your counter."

"I have not been ungrateful," said the old roadster, with an ill-toothed grin. "Thirty pieces of silver once bought more than toys."

Padre Pedro raised his hand with quick authority.

"Tend your tongue!" he said. "Your jest is no sweeter than your lips. I would have you tell my fortune."

The magician shot a penetrating look at the padre's face. It was bland and

simple, yet with what would seem a twinkle in the eyes.

"So!" said the old man. "It shall be."

And, placing cards aside upon the supper table, he took the padre's two hands in his bony clutch, and turned their palms upright.

"You are a priest," he began, in his high, broken voice, "of the true church and——"

"Wonderful!" ejaculated the padre.

A pink flush of anger overspread the meager face of the wizened fortune teller.

"And you rule your townfolk with bounty and with virtue. They fear you, for you are a learned man. They obey you, for they know you are a wise priest. They love you, because you are a good——"

"Tut!" said the padre, taking his hands away. "Can I not hear for nothing that I am bountiful and virtuous, learned and wise and good? And I knew that I was a priest thirty years before you found it out. We will have done with my fortune. But——and he looked searchingly at the bad old man——"have you, perchance, a love potion?"

There was silence between them, each with keenness studying the other's face.

Deceit and defiance mingled in the old man's slow reply.

"No," he said. "I speak it, and I have told you I am honest. I have no love potion."

The padre did not contradict him. Instead, he sighed, and stood up, and made toward the door.

"I am disappointed," he said. "I would have paid you well."

The old man laid a hand upon his arm.

"Wait!" he cried hastily. "I told the truth. But——" And again they watched each other.

Gradually the padre's mouth stretched out into a smile. The smile became a laugh, and above it rose a thin cackle from the shriveled one before him.

"So!" trembled the old voice. "So, so! A merchant must be cautious. And with priests twice cautious. And I told

the truth, my father. I have no potion, but I have a *smoke*. It is pure magic. No one has the like, not in Ruby, not in all Barcelona—no, perhaps not in Madrid, or in Mexico. You shall see!"

And he reached open a cupboard, and brought forth something closed within his hand.

"What is the price?" asked the padre.

The magician looked at him swiftly.

"Two pesetas."

"It is a large price," said Padre Pedro, and reseated himself.

"It is small," said the old man; "but I will be generous. I have not forgotten the thirty bits of silver. I may make the jest now, may I not? You shall test a powder at my cost. Close your eyes, and do as I bid you."

"Slowly—slowly!" said the padre.

"First, what are its properties?"

"Magic," said the necromancer shortly. "Need you know more?"

"What do you promise for it?"

"What did you promise yourself when you asked for a love potion?"

"To achieve my object."

"That is what I promise for the love smoke."

"Cease playing with my words," commanded the padre, "and come to business. I am a strong man."

"Then I will hasten while I am whole," said the magician, "for I am seldom honored by the church. It is a powerful charm, as you will see, and of honest magic—like the smell of roses, without the vulgarity of going, like wine, into the stomach. Close your eyes. Think of beautiful things. Breathe. You will smell new perfumes. You will see suns and moons and planets never printed in the almanac. You will see flowers, falling from them, rush by like the wind, and yellow comets swimming about like fish in a green sky, and whom you most love dancing like a star between your hands! And, clasping your hands together, you will laugh—laugh! Close your eyes—think of whom you love. So!"

The padre, trembling, breathed the love smoke in. His brain seethed with dazzling colors, and the magnitude of great spaces, while the snapping of the

wafer echoed a myriad times in his numb ears with a musical, rhythmic noise, and its salt smell seeped away in small waves of disseminating odor like the rare waters of Cologne; but the padre did not laugh, for, as the old man bade, he had fixed his thought on Whom he loved.

Yet majesty takes fear to bed in the bottom of an old brain, and the lines of his face were hardened, and sweat stood in a row of glittering beads around his brow as the love smoke cleared from his soul.

At last he said:

"I will buy it. How many have you sold?"

"Two times seven—twice a holy number."

"To men or women?"

"Mostly to men—all but one."

"I ask you, what is her name?"

"I know not. But there is none like her. Small, black—ah, she could be a patrician!"

"And she paid so much—two *pe-setas*?"

"I asked her no money."

"Do not tell me lies!" said the padre.

"It is the truth," returned the old man; and he added, with his leering smile: "I would not take it."

"She is a good girl," said the padre, with set lips.

"Yes," said the old man; "she is virtuous, but she is as guilty of knowledge as the nose of a dog."

"Give me the wafer," cried the padre, "and listen to what I say. How many have you left?"

"Why should I account to you? I have many."

"Do you know that I can confiscate such goods?"

The evil lips curled back from the old man's teeth.

"And go to jail in Barcelona?" he sneered. "Here is my bill of trade." And he drew a tattered paper from his shirt.

The padre laughed, as if in great good humor, as he handed it back to him.

"I see I cannot cheat you. Let us bargain, then. I am not rich, but I

have ready money. I would buy them all. How many powders have you, and what will you take off to sell the whole?"

The magician's eyes were gleaming greedily.

"Nothing," he said. "I have two hundred, and I can sell all before the seven days are out. Besides, selling to you I lose trade—one out of two means perfume, or ribbons, or rings of paste. Therefore, to you I increase the price. For the two hundred, five hundred. I have said it."

The padre drew his breath, and grew a little pale.

"It is a large sum. What would you do with it—obtain more of your wafers?"

"No," grinned the old man; "I would buy me a wife. My booth makes me a fair living, and with so much ready money I could content a young wife for a year—one who could dance, and bring trade to the booth. What do you answer me?"

The padre sighed deeply.

"Four hundred and fifty," he said.

"It is well," said the magician; and the padre rose.

"I will come with the money before midnight. It is true that you have no more?"

"It is true, my father."

"Count carefully. If there are some over, do not withhold them. For such I will pay double."

The old man laughed his cackling laugh again.

"I am not ungrateful, padre. I will keep your secret, and I will tell you one: There is one wafer laid aside, and you may not have it. Your little señorita comes for it to-night. Two are stronger than one—I told her so. You came in the crotch of time, padre. I will keep my promise to her, lest she scratch my eyes out. But I will not take her kisses. I am honest, padre."

Shaking him roughly off, the padre went with a white face through the torch-lit, seething square, looking neither to the right nor to the left, and down the highway toward Toninio's home.

"Toninio!" he called as he turned into the garden.

There was no answer, and before he could call again a dark figure rushed from the house and flung itself against him like a whirlwind, clutching his gown with tense fingers.

"He is not here!" cried Violeta, but with a voice not Violeta's—hoarse and thick. "Has he gone with her to the chasm? If she took him from me I would throw stones at her! I would throw stones—do you hear? To what end have I prayed? Does the Virgin hear? Or does she hear and mock? If I saw her, I would throw stones! If I saw her shadow in the chasm road, I would throw stones at her shadow!"

Padre Pedro put her at arm's length, and when his words came they fell harshly from his lips.

"At whose shadow?" he demanded.

Violeta did not answer. There were footfalls on the road, and she sprang past him with an inarticulate cry, and flung her arms around her husband's neck.

"Toninio," said the padre quietly, "your wife has been anxious. Have you neglected her? I am glad you have come. She will rest now. Violeta, I have need of Toninio. Go into the house. Be a good child, and sleep. I have arithmetic to do—money counting, indeed—and he must help me. Alas, I can understand four languages, but the only sum I can do is subtraction. Poor daughter! You are weary, and I bid you sleep. Your Toninio will be safe with me."

Violeta, with no word, went heavily to the house, and the padre drew her husband along the highway.

When they had gone some paces, Toninio halted.

"Padre," he said hesitatingly; "padre."

"Yes, Toninio?"

"Would you have me work to-night, padre? Is it not the festival—and the first day—the first night?"

"It is, Toninio. But have you not danced enough? Would I call you on a trivial errand? Would you not help me?"

"I would help you, padre. But—I would dance the last dance—at midnight."

"We will finish before midnight," said the padre; and they went on to the crux of the highway, to the chasm road, to the padre's house.

Entering the house, the padre from a closet deep and heavy-doored fetched out a great carved box, and set it down before him on a table. With Toninio seated opposite him, he turned its lock with a hefty iron key, and lifted back its lid. Inside were gold, stacked neatly at the center, and silver and copper shut separately off in compartments. He lifted out the gold, and pushed it across the table.

"Do you know what this is, Toninio?"

"It is the money earned by the little boys," Toninio answered.

"Exactly," said the padre, a tinge of bitterness in his voice. "All that they have earned, without deducting what has been spent. Still, it is mostly profit, and nearly all, profit or not, must be used—and not for a greenhouse, or fine tools, or California seeds. We must count out four hundred and fifty pesetas, and put all that is left in a bag by itself against extra need."

"What is it for?" asked Toninio, mystified.

"You will learn in fair time, Toninio. Meanwhile, I will ask you questions as we count. We will turn back twenty years, and you will answer as if you were yourself a little boy again, and were at a lesson. What is there in Terassa, Toninio?"

Toninio tried to smile; yet, gentle as the padre's tone had been, he could not.

"People," he said uneasily.

"Right," said the padre. "And what else?"

"Vineyards."

"True. And?"

"And—and—a church."

"The church," said the padre, with simple emphasis. "Is there nothing more?"

"I—I cannot think."

"There is one thing more worth mentioning. Shall I tell you what it is?"

"Yes—padre," said Toninio, trembling he knew not why.

"The devil," said the padre quietly, and continued counting the money.

Toninio turned very pale, and his hands grew idle.

"And him we are to buy," the padre went on calmly. "I can feel your heart bleed, Toninio, to learn that we must spend this money for wickedness. It will be three more years now before the little boys can have their greenhouse. It is very sad to learn that they must pay for what they have not done. If you ever have a child, Toninio, see that he does not have to pay."

There was silence between them save for the clinking of the padre's coins. He held a palmful out across the table.

"Here, for instance, is what José has earned. José has been unruly, but when he does work he earns in great proportion. And these coppers stand for Tito. He is very small, but he has worked a little. Are you alarmed, Toninio, to learn that the devil is in Terassa? Rest easy, for we will buy him off. He came yesterday morning, leading a good mule and a pretty cart. And he has sold black magic, concealed in white wafers, through the town. But I have found him out, Toninio. Let us thank God for that—else what might not have happened? Let me tell you, it is a serious matter. One of Terassa's daughters fell into his claws, and gave him fair looks for his sooty magic. Behold, she broke the wafer underneath a good man's nose, and he drank in the poison as Adam swallowed the fruit. He saw strange things; he knew strange thoughts; he felt unwonted desires."

"Did you see this?" asked Toninio, in a low, whispering voice.

"With my mind's eye, Toninio," said the padre, rapping down another coin. "Is it not well that it was given me to know? Consider it, Toninio: Suppose some Adam had bought the magic stuff and given it to Violeta!"

Toninio sprang from his chair with a hoarse, half-smothered cry.

"Quite right, Toninio. You are right

to feel so. But be quiet, and do not fear. Your wife would know the devil if he came in an Easter egg. And now," he added, scraping the calculated money into a large canvas bag, and holding out a small one for the rest, "we will go to the magician, and buy up his vapor. Your feelings are too sensitive, Toninio—I have done all the counting!"

Beside the beauty of her daughters and the manhood of her sons and the faith of her old folk, there were few things priceless in Terassa; of these few, most treasured was a brazen censer, designed with precious stones, which had long ago been given into her church as a votive offering by a devout widow from Castile. Sending Toninio before with the moneybags, Padre Pedro bade him wait his coming in the square.

"Tell all you know that something will transpire on the green," he said, and left him.

Going into the church, he took the censer out of the church. Then he went straight to the magician's shop, and, entering, demanded:

"How many did you find in all?"

"Two hundred and two," said the old man, and held them out in a parcel.

"You are truthful? As you value your shrunken bones?"

"As I value my profit!" snarled the necromancer. "Where is your money?"

"It is waiting on the green. Hold your package till you have it, if you choose. Follow me."

The old man's gleaming eyes traveled, full of suspicion, from where they feasted on the glittering censer to the padre's face; but, tightly clutching his packet, he followed him.

In the square without there was a restless hush. It was late. The gay music had flagged, the dancing had grown listless, and upon Toninio's message the diminished crowd had broken into groups. Those upon the green were mainly townsfolk, who talked in mysterious suggestions of a catastrophe, or a miracle; and most of the foreigners, in respect, stood farther off,



or were gone away. Toninio had posted himself at the corner of the lace makers', and lingered there, holding the moneybags, alone. He was deferred to as the padre's intimate, and no words were said to him. Even Margarita, though she watched him with unswerving eyes, did not approach too near.

He saw the two dark figures step from the shop, and followed them as the padre, making their way among the villagers, walked to the center of the green. A murmur and a thrill both of fear and of excited anticipation ran through the starlight, flashed on the sacred vessel in his hand, and identified his bent companion. Some faces that looked on grew very white.

The padre halted, and raised up his arm.

"My people," he said, his voice trembling a little, but growing steady and clear with the strength of the words it spoke, "come close. I bid you listen, and watch, and remember. There has been black magic in Terassa. It was brought here by this old man whom you see, and with some of you—some who stand before me now, or who have gone their ways to the paradise of fools—he has waged his devil's commerce. You see these bags? They hold but a few pesetas over the price of his remaining devil's ware, and the money in them belongs to Tito, and Bernardo, and Guillermo, and José—money earned in the brown earth by the sixty hands of my thirty little boys. The old man takes the money, he has said, to buy himself a wife. I thank God no good woman would be bought by him—him who would spread dishonor throughout an honest place. If I were so powered, I would seize his goods and drive him from among us; but, alas, he is armed with a license, like a whelp in a large town, lest a citizen be bitten without a fee having accrued to the law! So I have brought him here that Terassa may see me pay her debt. He owes me two hundred wafers and two. Count to yourselves as he pays them out, and watch that I give him again four hundred and fifty pesetas and nine. And you, Toninio, while we count, run

to the kitchen of the inn, and bring me back a pan of living coals."

At his words, a gasp came from the silent, awe-struck crowd, and the old man, with a gulp of terror, looked up into the padre's face, and then behind him at the people, as though for some path of escape; but withal his hand was clutched tight upon his goods as Toninio went wonderingly away.

"Fear not," said the padre. "The coals are not for you. Count out your wafers."

Unfastening the packet with quivering fingers, the magician dumbly obeyed; and when all were told, the padre emptied the coins from the large bag into his lap, and saw him number them eagerly in again. Then, as the priest figured the sum of nine pesetas from the smaller sack, Toninio pushed through the crowd with a pan of crackling coals, and set it beside him. The whole square was hushed. Breaking through the stillness, a sob came from somewhere among the people, and from somewhere else another. Then all was quiet once more, and the padre's voice was heard again:

"The old man has his money now. Terassa saw me give it; but her debt is not all paid. My children, he came among us to sell us what cannot be sold. God's first gift in life to us is love. Love is His last comment on our deeds. From Him we have it for the asking. Shall we, then, buy and sell and barter it among ourselves? What kind of love can man find in a wafer? Only one kind, and that the pauper freely gets within the church. Outside her doors, what magic is there that can have to do with it? No more than that which lights a woman's eyes, or sits in the strong sinews of an honest man. Now you may watch me—I will say no more."

Stooping, he set the jeweled censer on the ground. He emptied the pink coals within, and on them the white wafers—a handful, and another, and another. The magician, standing by with frightened face, stepped back, a low cry coming from his lips. In the deep silence, a cracking as of pine cones

snapped and sputtered, and a green flame issued from the sacred cup. Leaping, wavering, leaping higher, it cast a wan light on the staring faces, and threw black moving shadows on the ground, and a great shifting grotesque of the padre back of him along the grass and against the illumined foliage of a towering tree.

"It is a miracle," whispered a woman, sobbing, to a woman next her.

"And even as she spoke, the flame in the censer was dimmed, and a small, dense cloud of pungent smoke rose out of it, curling upward, spreading in the air, thickening and distorting the shadows, floating among the people. Some turned away their heads; some gazed in fascination, drinking the salt, sweet, numbing odor in; some murmured, with still voices: "It is a miracle!"

An infidel might not have despised them. Suddenly the padre's huge black shadow fled forward, and reappeared against the brilliant tree, upholding something in its giant hands. Stepping before the flaring cup, he had seized the old magician by the waist, and, lifting him as he would a child for baptism, set him down behind the cup, where all might see. Pinioning him with one hand by the neck, he held him in the love smoke.

One cry of horrid terror came from the old man's throat, and then the people of Terassa saw him squirming in the green-hued vapor, struggling not to breathe. But the padre mercilessly held him there, and breathe he must, or die; and thus what he had been paid for became his again, seeping into his nostrils, into his lungs, into his brain. As the flame sank, and the love smoke cleared away, the padre flung him headlong toward the crowd, and he fell prostrate, face downward, to the ground.

No one ventured toward the stricken figure, and he lay huddled, motionless, as though dead; but presently he stirred and lifted his bony head and shuddered to his feet. With a thin, shaking hand at his lips, he peered dazedly around, and as his eyes came upon the padre and the burned-out chalice at his feet, he threw up both arms across his face,

and ran, squealing, away, like a baby with an old man's voice.

The love smoke, diaphanous and distant in the starlight, had drifted out over the valley, and the people, hushed and marveling, went as silently away. Margarita had vanished. Toninio and the padre were alone on the dancing green.

As he leaned to pick the tarnished censer from the grass, the padre heard a stifled sound behind him. Turning, he saw Toninio crouched down on the turf, his head bent upon his arms.

"Esposita!" he was moaning. "Esposita!"

He gently touched his shoulder.

"Go to her," he said softly.

But Toninio, struggling to his feet, seized him in a convulsive grasp.

"Padre!" he cried out wildly. "Padre, I have sinned! I confess it. I will confess to you!"

The padre, holding him at arm's length, gazed long into the green eyes that stared at him from the pale, unhappy face.

"There is nothing to confess, *Toninio mio*," he said, at last. "I know as much as you yourself could tell me. We have lived, Toninio, and we have learned, and paid. To pay, I took the children's money. To learn, I had taken—the love smoke."

Toninio's green eyes were fastened on his face. They seemed to look him through and through, as when, years long ago, he had asked him childish questions.

"Go to her," said the padre again huskily. But they heard their names called, and some one running toward them.

"Padre! Toninio!" It was old Rosa, and her face was very frightened. "Violeta!" she cried, panting up to them. "Violeta!"

"What? What?" Toninio and the padre demanded it together.

"She has run away into the chasm in her wedding dress! I saw her from the top of the hill."

Like the stinging cut of a whip, her words at the pilgrims' box—her first

words to him on her marriage day—smote on Toninio's mind: "In this place, if our marriage be blighted, I would die!"

"Come!" he gasped, and dashed out of the square.

The padre seized old Rosa's arm, and pointed to the blackened censer on the ground.

"Guard it," he said, and ran after Toninio.

Rosa, from the hilltop, holding the burned vessel in her hands, watched them disappear into the night mist of the chasm.

"Not so fast, my son," the padre said once. "We may go by her."

"We will find her at the pilgrims' box," Toninio answered, "and we will find her dead."

And they ran on and on swiftly, with no sound save that of their thudding feet.

They found her, indeed, at the shrine of the wooden Virgin. It was near the hour of dawn, and through the disseminating mist they descried the greater whiteness of her gown. Her cheek was laid against the skirt of the image, and her arms were around it, motionless. But as they sprang up the steep embankment she raised her head, and then, as if bewildered, rose to her feet.

Their voice too dry, their hearts too wild, for crying out, they rushed toward her; but as the struggling starlight fell on the face she turned upon them, they stopped, and stood together, marveling. Her eyes were full of a light as soft as that of the stars, and she looked at

them as with the countenance of one transfigured.

"Were you frightened?" she asked. "Is it so late? I thought you would still be dancing."

"Esposita!" cried Toninio, and came a step nearer, stretching out his arms. "Esposita!" And could say no more.

She looked at him, and from him to the padre, as though doubting to which she should speak on, and a glow of pink swept up her face to her temples.

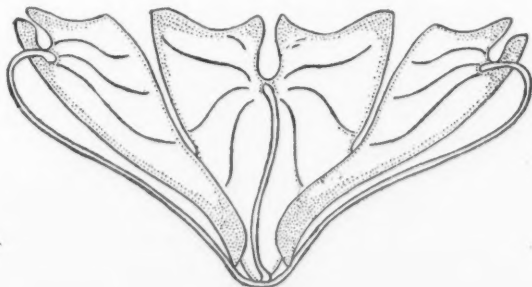
"Esposito," she said, at last, placing one hand on his golden hair and one on the wooden image of Maria, "do you remember how you chided me here on our marriage day? You were right, for it is as the padre said: 'Here life begins!'"

And Toninio, understanding, sank upon his knees.

Beside them, his eyes upraised, the padre moved his lips; but his prayer was shortened by a sound from the road below them. Nearer and nearer it came, plodding, creaking. Presently in the dim morning light a cart rolled by in the direction of the mountains, drawn by a mule, which was led by a bent old man.

And this was not all. Across the canvased burden of the cart, slight, languid, tousle-headed, lay stretched the slumbering figure of a woman. With a low cry, the padre started down the bank, as if he would snatch her back. But something floating up through the mist halted him, as though a cold hand had been laid again upon his heart.

Margarita, stirring in her sleep, had laughed.



# A CONFIRMED BACHELOR

By  
CHARLES  
VALE

**I**T has always been surprising to me that George Bernard Shaw, the wittiest man in the world, was not clever enough to remain a bachelor. I have managed it. Perhaps Shaw has not had my advantages.

Marriage is really not inevitable; it becomes increasingly easy to avoid, if you once acquire the habit. But character is not built firmly in a day; the foundations must be laid in early youth, and the growing flower—mixed metaphors are so convenient—watered frequently with the ashes of experience. Every proposal averted is a step to better things, a link in the chain of unselfishness that leads to confirmed celibacy and happiness. Yet some of the world's greatest men have had their moments of weakness, to be paid for by the bitter memories of the honeymoon. Even politicians have been caught. Incessant vigilance is essential, if a man is to remain useful to his country; and to serve one's country is surely the highest privilege of a citizen, from which only civil servants in office hours are really exempt.

The most desirable ages at which to avoid matrimony are twenty-five and thirty-three; but, as for all professions, preparations should be commenced immediately after leaving college—or, if it happens that you do not go to a university immediately before not going. No career has so many responsibilities as that of the bachelor, and only careful training can enable him to carry out his duties with complete satisfaction to

himself and the women he has not married.

For a married man is responsible merely to his wife—a single woman; he has to reconcile her to living with him; to compel her to be happy, in spite of all her opposition; and to make provision for the time when the exigencies of life will take him away, and ample alimony is claimed. But a bachelor is responsible, not simply to one woman, or even to one at a time, but to all the women who might have been his wives, or wife. He has not to reconcile a single woman to living with him; he has to reconcile many women to living solitary lives. He has not to make any one woman happy; he has to persuade all women to acquiesce in his own happiness, and to leave it undisturbed.

A difficult task, unless the habit of side-stepping has been firmly established. Women are so attractive in their unstudied moments that there is perpetual temptation for a bachelor to renounce his unselfishness and permit a brunette to sacrifice her freedom and enlarge his expenditure. But a wedding, or the announcement of a wedding, or even the preliminary deceptions of an engagement must provide food for melancholy reflection for all men whose finer senses have not been blunted by constant matrimony.

Think of an inexperienced woman, plunged for the first time into the maelstrom of married life. In her father's home she has had ample leisure to avoid domestic duties; her views of the future are colored with Turner-esque bril-

liance; she knows nothing of the bristly-uncomfortableness of a man's chin before he has shaved. But to the fascination of the trousseau, succeeds deracination.

The realization at breakfast on the second morning of the honeymoon that every year contains three hundred and sixty-five days, and that leap year merely adds to the burden, must bring pallor to the most realistic complexion. To sit opposite to the same form, however manly, through all the days of all the years that thrust themselves forward insistently in a funereal, devitalizing procession; to watch the same face, to hear the same voice, while love retrogrades into affection, and affection into indifference or actual aversion—surely this is a punishment too great for the mere thoughtlessness of a proposal!

But nature is inexorable. She never forgives. While it takes a bride four days, or perhaps five, if her mathematical studies have been abbreviated, to recognize that two lumps of sugar in each of two cups of coffee every day for only ten years, means an aggregate of fourteen thousand six hundred and eight lumps, at least, and possibly fourteen thousand six hundred and twelve, Nature has reckoned it all out beforehand, to the last lump. She has taken into account that each may consume two cupfuls daily, or that the husband may take two and the wife one, or vice versa; and she has doubled or increased by half the ominous total. Now abruptly she dumps—no other word will do—the appalling mountain by the bride's chair. It ascends through the ceiling, can be pictured rising resistlessly through floor after floor, bursting through the roof, overflowing in incessant quivering streams. The rooms are flooded with white dominoes.

This is the beginning; disillusionment commences with excessive sweetness and passes to the claret. Lunch succeeds to breakfast. The decanter swells into an enormous crater; trickling from the edges is the sluggish overflow of the vast, dull-red lake. Toiling up the sides are reconstructed cows, flocks of sheep, fluttering hens, beasts and birds

and fishes out of water—a monstrous memorial of civilized appetites. And they two—husband and wife—have constructed that Vesuvius, have separately sacrificed those flocks and herds. And dinner still remains.

Her husband does not understand the weariness in her eyes, the sudden hardness that conquers the tremor in her voice. He goes out to smoke a cigar on the veranda; and she sees, accumulating round him, box upon box of panetelas, purilanos, and perfectos. At his feet are the ashes of the unspent years.

These are the lighter shadows of the honeymoon; the gloom deepens as anticipation is transformed into a memory. I will not intrude on the sacred unhappiness of an established home, when discontent has become the routine and cheerfulness the rare exception of marriage-wrecked lives.

Children may mitigate the monotony; in their childish wailings, in their need for care and attention during the hours devoted by the unfettered to quiet slumber, the mother and father may find distraction from the anxieties of mutual deception. Many a truce to bickering has been called by the protest of an infant interested in its first teeth; measles and whooping cough have repeatedly averted domestic crises and filled yawning gaps in lives made lonely by excessive companionship.

Contrast these inevitable penalties of marriage with the rewards of a bachelor. Night after night he can sit alone in his quiet house or apartment. He can review the unchanging past, and, repeating the picture, discover the future. Unruffled, undifferentiated, the orderly days go by. No one interferes with his shirts. He attends to them himself. No one loses his handkerchiefs for him; he loses them himself. No one leaves the delicate, indefinable atmosphere of femininity in the house; anything that is left about he leaves himself—and has to find it when he is in a hurry. No one objects to his smoking in the dining room, or his bedroom, or the bathroom, or in any room that is his, and his only. No one ob-

jects to anything that he may do or leave undone; and this has a valuable strengthening effect upon character.

It removes the necessity for considering the interests of others, for practicing the little intimate arts of conciliation or endearment. He does not see his reflection in a woman's eyes, the measure of his character in the softness of her lips and the beauty of her life. The only mirror in which he sees himself is his shaving mirror. Without preoccupations or misgivings, he acquires a resolute aggressiveness. He is self-centered, self-sufficient. No one is disturbed by worrying as to what he will do in any given conditions. All know that he will choose what is best for himself. This saves anxiety and loss of time on the part of others.

The ideal bachelor is the most complete approach to a perfect being that civilization has yet evolved. But it must be remembered that bachelorhood demands unbroken consistency. It is not possible to resume the halo after a temporary lapse from virtue. Marriage can never be condoned.

Leap year, with its unfortunate associations, may disturb, but need not distress, a confirmed bachelor. If he pro-

poses to remain in his happy state of singularity, he must realize that he has now reached what may be considered his declining days. To every inquiry that is not perfectly audible and distinct he must say no, firmly; or, when he thinks that he is merely assenting to the probability of rain in the morning, he may find that he has accepted liability for a breach-of-promise suit. The suffragette campaigns have taught women the value of stratagems. It is not sufficient merely to be on one's guard; one must take arms against this *She of troubles*.

Long hair, an ingratiating voice, soft, deprecating ways, a little perfume on one's handkerchief, and an avoidance of all healthy exercise and dangerous pursuits are characteristics that should be carefully cultivated. If they appear natural, they will prove an effective safeguard against any woman who is exercising her leap-year privilege of looking for a man.

"To thine own self be true" is the motto of the brave and free. Carry forward the flag of independence; march on with the banner of bachelorhood floating in the breeze. *A bas le mariage! Vive le solitaire!*



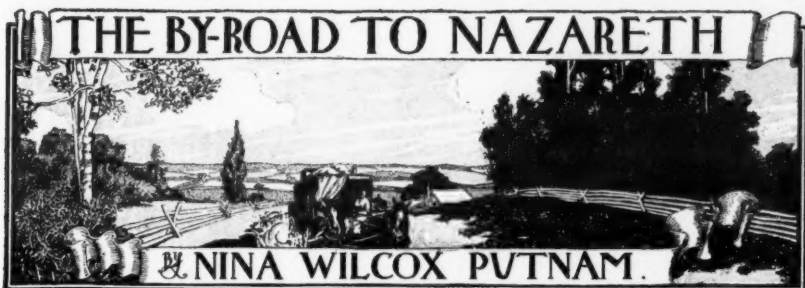
## MY DISCOVERIES

I DO not doubt that beauties I have missed,  
While toiling in the busy road of life,  
Where roses sent to glad our hearts, are crushed,  
Too often 'neath the heavy feet of strife;  
I do not doubt Old Masters I have seen  
And turned away, nor half their value knew,  
But oh, my dear, when first I glimpsed your face,  
I knew your eyes were wonderful and blue.

I do not doubt my ear, untrained, has paid  
But little heed to all earth's melodies,  
My hand has hid an unrepentant yawn  
Mayhap, when even genius touched the keys;  
I have not marveled at the lark's glad hymn,  
Nor stooped to catch a song where waters purled,  
But when you spoke, my dear, I seemed to catch  
A hint of all the music in the world.

MABEL STEVENS FREER.





**T**HE Worst Boy in the Town sat at the fork in the road and whittled a birch rod. As he whittled he sang—half a tone aslant the key—and when he had stripped the rod bare, he cut the air with it savagely, his freckled face puckering into a vengeful frown. *Swish! swish!* went the rod, whistling a tuneless song like the boy's own, and overly familiar to his ears. A sardonic smile spread his mouth, disclosing a gap in the very front of his even row of teeth. He gripped the rod firmly in both hands, and then, breaking it in four over his knee, cast the pieces from him with a laugh.

"You won't never lick me!" he cried. "No, nor none of your relations, nuther! I'll go be a gypsy afore I'll go home an' take my thrashin'."

It was a lonely spot in which the boy sat. At his back arose a tall, white-washed signpost, bearing three arms, two of which pointed in practically the same direction, and bore practically the same legend.

**NAZARETH, 4 M.,**

said one, which pointed down the hard, white, State-built road; and,

**NAZARETH, 7½ M.,**

said the other, which pointed down a shady, deeply rutted track, worn by travel of a decade past. Upon the third arm, pointing down the handle of the fork, the direction read:

**RAND VILLAGE, 3 M.**

No house was in sight, nor any sign of

human activity; only the zigzag fences, which ineffectively attempted to hold back the riotous hedgerows of the fields, and the dark woods that loomed behind the guidepost, sheltering the two roads to Nazareth till they were lost in cool dimness after a hundred yards or so. Mid-spring had robbed New England with tender, voluptuous green, and in this secluded valley the warm air scarcely stirred. An early locust boomed shrilling upon the warm, hazy quiet.

"Naw!" said the Worst Boy in the Town aloud. "I ain't a-goin' ter go ter school days like this, an' I ain't a-goin' ter learn that piece out o' the Noo Testamint fer punishment, nor be licked fer not learnin' it, nuther. I'm sick o' thet Holy Family, anyways; they belong ter Christmas, not ter spring. An' as fer you," he continued, addressing the broken bits of birch rod, "when I'm a man, I'm a-goin' ter hack down the whole forest o' birch trees—every birch tree in the world. So's the boys won't be licked no more."

He dug his bare toes into the dust and glared fiercely at the broken rod. Again the locust boomed; and with the sound came a longing for the swimming pool beyond. Surely it was warm enough.

There came the sound of horses and a wagon, heralding the approach of a "team." Very quickly it hove in sight, and coming up over the back of the hill, along the white, sun-dusty road from Rand Village; and, at sight of it, the Worst Boy's heart almost stopped beating.

Gypsies! It was a gypsy wagon—though once it had been a grocer's; and the sides were painted gorgeously. Through the roof projected a chimney from which a faint blue veil of smoke was floating; and in the front part, behind the driver's seat, was a little window with lace curtains. Two fine horses drew the conveyance, and their harness was gay with scarlet wool and burnished brass. Withal it had a festive appearance; and the boy's imagination painted it still gayer, with a thousand hues of adventure, piratical and school-free. Behind it followed a led horse, and on a driver's seat crouched a woman, who held the reins with a frantic clutch. She was young, and her face would have been very beautiful had it been less drawn with pain. She half sat, half lay upon the bench, and her eyes were wild. She appeared to be all alone, and to be suffering greatly.

Something choking, he knew not what, clutched at the boy's heart as he looked into that lovely, agonized face; and he felt as he remembered feeling one day while he had stood watching the soldiers go off to the war in Cuba. At sight of his ragged little figure, the woman brought her horses to a halt, and addressed him, her voice coming sharp and sobbingly. And yet she smiled a little, too, at his homely, startled face.

"On which road are the woods most thick and deep?" she asked, with a foreign accent. "Quick! Which is the most lonely road?"

"This," said the Worst Boy, pointing to the narrow, old road. "No one hardly ever goes this way. It's longest."

Without speaking, but sending him another struggling little smile, she lifted her hand, let something fall, and, heading her horses down the lesser road, rapidly disappeared from sight.

Slowly the boy wheeled about to gaze after the retreating gleam of the gayly colored van; and not until the last echo of its passing had died away did he return to thoughts of swimming.

"Gee! That woman looked awful!" said the Worst Boy. "Awful, but kinder grand!"

Then he crossed the main road in the general direction of the brook, and went to bathe.

After an hour or so of luxurious idling in the pool, wrapped in the delicious consciousness of doing something which was forbidden to his mates, who were shut up in school, suffering the punishment of the righteous, he returned to the crossroads. What should he do next? To go home was impossible, as it was not yet high noon, and his premature appearance would be a confession of truancy.

He seated himself upon the grass, his back against the guidepost, reached out a grimy hand, picked up the maple spray, which still lay near, and began tracing a design in the dust with it. The heat and silence were heavier now as the world came to its midday pause. All about was that sense of breath suspended preparatory to a deep sigh of contentment which pervades the noon of a June day. The boy caught a shining beetle, pinched it to death gently, and put it in his pocket. Then he discovered that the flat of the maple leaves would draw up the dust by suction; and, while he was deeply absorbed in experimenting with this, suddenly he became conscious, without any warning sound, that some one was approaching stealthily.

Like a wild woodland thing, he raised his head sharply, his sense of hearing intensely alert. Then, motionless as a surprised deer, he watched a man emerge from the alder thicket which fringed the road in the direction of Rand.

He was a strange-looking man, was this newcomer, with little gold rings in his ears. His coat was missing, and his shirt was soiled and torn. His hair, which grew thick and curling, was disordered, and bits of leaves and bark were caught in it, and his clothing was stained with mud and scarred by briars. A very giant in strength and stature, he towered like a young Hercules; but his dark skin dripped sweat, and his breath came hard. Evidently he had fought a difficult and secret way across the swamps and through the woods; and

here, coming out abruptly upon the fork of the road, he stared about him wildly, as though fearful of being observed. Then he began scanning the ground rapidly, as though in search of something.

Motionless, fascinated, the boy watched in silence. What was the man—a pirate? Very probably, for he had gold coins sewn to the fringe of the bright sash about his waist, and all he needed was a sword. Suddenly the man caught sight of the boy, and, crossing rapidly to where he stood, pointed to the maple twig which dangled from the child's hand.

"Where did you get that?" he demanded fiercely.

"I—I—" gasped the Worst Boy in Town, completely terrified for once.

"*Dic mande!*" shouted the man. "Tell me, son of a *Gorgio*, or I will throttle thee!"

"I—in the road!" gasped the boy.

"In the road, eh?" panted the man, with an intensity of eagerness which made the words vibrate. "Show me where."

"There!" said the Worst Boy, flinging down the bit of green. "Leggo! You're a-chokin' me!"

The man relaxed his hold on the boy's neck, but seized him by the ear.

"What d'yer want, anyhow?"

"Which way did the wagon go? A woman was driving it—a painted wagon. Which way, O son of a dog!" screamed the man. "*Dibble!* Say which way!"

"Along the byroad to Nazareth!" yelled the boy, pointing. "Leggo my ear!"

The man shouted a peal of laughter, as though from sheer relief, and, tearing one of the shining buttons from his vest, put it into the boy's hand, and rushed off down the lesser road.

The Worst Boy looked first at the vanishing gypsy, and then at the object in his grimy palm. It was a strange button, that was more like a coin, being round, but somewhat irregular in shape. It bore the laurel-wreathed image of a man with a big nose, and curious words that were like those in the detested

Latin grammar. It was very heavy, too. The Worst Boy rubbed it on his knee, bit it, hurt his mouth, and then clenched it secretively in the moist hollow of his hand, as a horseman clattered up over the hill from Rand. Almost at the same time there appeared a second horseman along the highroad from Nazareth; and at the fork the two drew rein and exchanged greetings. The first to speak was the young sheriff, who pulled off his wide-brimmed hat and wiped his serious pink face. His hair was straw color and his eyes were blue. He was slim and tall; a *very* young sheriff.

"Hello, Bill!" said he moodily. "This is a hell of a chase, ain't it?"

"Seen any signs of him?" asked the old sheriff, whose gray-bearded, hatchet face was drawn with severe, uncompromising lines.

"Nary a sign," replied the first speaker. "Darn the cuss! I wish he'd elected to stay in jail jist *one* day more afore breakin' out!"

"I suppose you do," rejoined the older man. "I hear you got good reason for wantin' to stay at home to-day. How is she?"

"Fine!" said the young sheriff, his face brightening. "She's doing fine! She give us a terrible scare; but she's fine now."

"A boy, ain't it?" asked the old sheriff.

"Yep! Nine pounds. He come at five o'clock this mornin'."

"You don't say! Well, well! Congratulate you, I'm sure!" said the old sheriff. "Don't wonder you hate leavin' home this mornin'. But a horse thief! That's too ungodly a crime ter let go unpunished. We got ter recapture him, come what may. I was one o' the o-riginal posse what caught him."

"Why, so you was!" said the young sheriff. "They never found the horse, did they?"

"Naw! The woman got off with it!" said the old sheriff. "Down to the jail they was all kind o' wishin' he'd got away sooner. A crazy sort, he is. Why, he actooly tried ter git us ter let him off because his wife was sick an'

he wanted ter be with her. Ha! ha! he made *me* sick! A horse thief is the meanest thief in the world. I wouldn't show one no mercy."

"Right yer are!" said the young sheriff. "Yet I was hearin' Buck Jones tell us how, if he could git the horse back, he wouldn't prosecute the gypsy feller for stealin' it."

Here the speaker caught sight of the Worst Boy in Town, and addressed him good-naturedly.

"Hello, Bob!" he said. "What you doin' out o' school at this hour? By heck! If my young one don't grow up better'n you, I'll lick the pants off'n him!"

"Aw, you shut up, Mr. Bower!" said the Worst Boy. "You ain't got no boy."

"Haven't I, though!" cried the young sheriff, with a joyous laugh. "You just ought to hear him holler!"

The old sheriff looked at the Worst Boy with a disapproving frown.

"Mind how yer talk back to older folks!" he snapped. "Quit wriggling about an' pay some attenshun! Hev yer seen any persons about here this mornin'? No lies, now!"

Instantly the Worst Boy was alive with antagonism, and he responded with alacrity to the bad name the older man put upon him.

"Naw! Ain't seen no one!" he lied, principally because lying had been suggested.

"Been here long?"

"All mornin'."

"Well," said the old sheriff, turning to the young sheriff, "guess I'll be ridin' back a spell, and take a look down around Devil's Mountain way. Ride with me as far as the creamery."

"All right!" said the young sheriff, wheeling his horse about. "I hear that this gypsy feller is powerful strong. D'yer know he broke the winder bars with his bare hands?"

The rest of his speech was lost in the clatter of hoofs; and again the Worst Boy was left sentinel at the fork. He looked at the sun. It was high noon now, and he was hungry. From the distant village came the faint chime of a bell. School was out! It would be

safe to go home now. He took the golden button from the palm of his left hand, breathed upon the burnished surface, and polished it again.

"I guess it's worth at least three *migs* and six *alleys*," he said aloud.

Then, with a great noise of galloping, the young sheriff returned. The Worst Boy ran up and stopped him.

"Say!" the boy called out. "Say! Is you really got a baby up to your house?"

"Yes! You bet!" replied the young sheriff.

"Say, Mr. Bower, I like you," said the boy; "an' I'll show you what I got. Lookey here!"

He bounded over to the horseman, and stood on tiptoe to display his treasure. The young sheriff leaned over in his saddle, an exclamation of surprise breaking from him as he examined the shining thing.

"Where did you get that, Bob?" he asked, watching the child's face closely.

"I didn't steal it!" cried the Worst Boy in Town, instantly on the defensive.

"Well, if you didn't steal it, where did you get it, eh?"

"Gimme it!" said the boy. "It's mine!"

"I'll give it back when you tell me where you got it," said the man.

"I didn't take it," insisted the boy. "A feller *give* it ter me, I tell yer!"

"What feller was that?"

"A funny-lookin' feller. He come out o' the woods," said the boy.

"When?" said the young sheriff, all excitement.

"'Bout an hour ago."

"But you said there hadn't been no one—"

"That was because of the old sheriff," said the boy. "He made me mad. But there was a feller here. Honest there was. He went off along the byroad ter Nazareth."

"Good!" shouted the young sheriff, tossing back the coin. "I'll have him yet."

And, wheeling about, he galloped off in the direction taken by the gypsy.

The Worst Boy in Town looked after the fast-disappearing horseman, and then turned and looked toward Rand Village. Then he looked up the shady byroad again, and, forgetting his hunger, set off after the young sheriff at as good a pace as his legs could carry him.

All the May flowers were in blossom, and the perfume of them came warmly from the dim recesses of the woods on either hand. Splashes of sunlight, like a gold-embroidered gypsy design, filtered through the leaves, marking a gorgeous carpet upon the new mosses and dead leaves. From under the broken fences which boundried the woods, the spring beauties lifted their eager little faces, staring in gentle surprise at the running boy in his ragged shirt of blue. Late blossoms of dogwood gleamed high up under the cool, protecting spruces, white stars in the twilight of the dark-green branches. A little bobtail rabbit scuttled across the road and vanished under a thorn bush, red with blossoms. Somewhere in the secret recesses of the wood, a hermit thrush was pouring forth a love song, more pure and passionate than the sweet spring wind.

On and on sped the boy, his sturdy brown legs carrying him swift, his little brown heels spurning the dust.

At a curve in the road there jutted out a miniature hill, covered with scrub oak, and bayberry, and rock pink, growing close and vivid. At its front ran the road; at its rear a stream in a little dell. At one side was a gently sloping bank; and at this point the fence had been taken away to give the woodcutters access to the heart of their realm. No woodcutters came here at this season; but, none the less, a heavy wagon had been there recently, and several horses. Moved by the sight of these, and by the fact that he could no longer hear the sheriff's horse ahead of him on the road, the boy turned in, the cool, moist ground touching his hot feet healingly.

The track led farther and farther into the wood. Along the little dell the brooklet twinkled, clear and full. Al-

ders grew thickly along the edge, and white birches, young and supple, with yellow-green leaves and coats of shining, satin bark, all of them whispering and fluttering like maidens at a ball. The boy pushed on farther, still following the track, and presently came upon the sound of voices and a faint scent of smoke.

Instinctively he dodged into the underbrush, and on hands and knees approached the place whence the talk came. Very softly he pushed the growing things aside, until finally he could peer through a tangled web of green at a picture like a page out of a storybook.

At one side of a little clearing ran the brook. Close beside it, and forming a second side to the square, stood the painted wagon, its shafts upon the ground, its curtains flung wide, disclosing a disordered interior, where only the little gold gods upon the hanging shelf were in their usual place. Opposite to it four horses were tethered, one of them being the young sheriff's, while on the fourth side of the clearing, so close to the boy that he could almost have touched her, lay the beautiful lady who had driven the painted wagon.

She was lying upon a mattress, and was covered with a silken rug of many colors, bright with embroideries and bits of tinsel. Her dark hair lay about her pale face in a wild, tangled mass, and in its depths had lodged some white petals from the blossoming tree which sheltered her. But most wonderful of all, the lady was smiling sweetly now; and in her arms there lay a bundle, which set up a thin, feeble wailing.

In the center of this charmed space stood the man with the gold rings in his ears—the man who had “come out of the wood.” Facing him stood the young sheriff, who looked from the prostrate woman and her child to the man he had come to capture.

“My God!” the young sheriff was saying. “So that’s why you broke out o’ jail! That’s why you broke the bars with your bare hands! My God!”

“Yes,” said the gypsy.

“Is it a boy?” asked the young sheriff.

"Yes," said the gypsy again.

"So is mine!" said the young sheriff. And then he did a thing which only a very young sheriff could have done. He put out his right hand.

"What?" exclaimed the gypsy, drawing back.

"Shake!" said the young sheriff. And the two shook hands.

Then the young sheriff walked over to the horses, and, mounting his own, unfastened the led horse of the caravan.

"Seeing how things are, I'm going ter let you be," said the very young sheriff. "But I'll take Buck Jones' horse along with me."

There was a moment of silence. Then the gypsy bowed his head, and murmured the departing blessing of his people:

"*Ja Dereletti! Walk with God!*"

And the young sheriff rode off, leading Buck Jones' horse.

The boy reached the fork of the road as soon as the man did.

"Gimme a ride home?" he cried.

But the young sheriff shook his head.

"Can't have you getting th' habit of follerin' me around!" he shouted.

"'Twouldn't do fer you to be where my boy is! 'Twouldn't *never* do!"

And he urged his horse on faster.

So, with a sigh, the Worst Boy in Town put the golden button into his trousers pocket in company with some marbles, a fishhook, a bit of string, and the crushed beetle, and, turning out of the byroad to Nazareth, struck out along the broad highway to Rand Village.



## THE COLLEEN

OCHONE, 'tis the heart o' me's longing to see  
The little thatched hut where me mother and me  
And Paudeen and father were happy as birds  
With never a care or a hint o' cross words;  
But singing, and dancing, and laughing the while,  
And running foot races from lough to the stile.  
Ochone, ochone,  
'Tis the heart o' me's stone  
With longing to be in the arms o' me own.

Ochone, 'tis the heart o' me's craving to hear  
The thrush's sweet song in the lap o' the year;  
The blithe, saucy blackbird that whistled all day;  
The mother bird's call in the wild, tangled brae;  
The gay little stream tumbling down from the rock,  
And the rune o' the boat rocking sweet in the lock.  
Ochone, ochone,  
'Tis the heart o' me's stone  
With craving to be in the land o' me own.

Ochone, 'tis the heart o' me's yearning to go  
Across the black water that's calling me so;  
For dark be the shadows that bide in me breast  
When sorrow walks with me and won't let me rest;  
If I lay down to sleep, sure I waken with fright,  
And hear them all moaning like ghosts o' the night.  
Ochone, ochone,  
'Tis the heart o' me's stone  
With yearning to kiss the ould lips o' me own.  
GORDON JOHNSTONE.



# CROOKED MILES



## ANNA ALICE CHAPIN

**T**was dusk when Guy Madison boarded the Gilt-edged Express for Chicago, and piled his grip, umbrella, suit case, and magazines onto the forward seat of section 23. He looked at the number with grim approval as he did so.

"Just the number for me," he told himself ironically. "Any man that has been fool enough to lose a girl three times over, deserves to draw twenty-three in every deal he tackles."

He opened one of his windows wide, had a brief argument with the porter about it, switched on the electric light, and began to read. His magazine failed to divert him. His thoughts were nearly as somber as the flat dun levels of New Jersey through which the train was flying.

Every effort to find Eve Lansing had been fruitless. She had vanished from his ken as completely as a mirage or a dream. After the customhouse episode, when he had saved her from imprisonment for smuggling at the eleventh hour, she had written him one little note. He carried it about with him, and was not a bit ashamed of doing so, either; and now he pulled it out for the hundredth time and read its few lines over:

Thank you, and thank you, and thank you. The necklace wasn't mine, but Claire's, so I have given it to her, but I'll never forget what you did. You are a true knight-errant, and much too good to have ever wasted a thought on

EVE.

He loved her for writing it, but he hated the little note of grave humility in it. He liked to think of Eve as a daring, spirited, unconquerable creature—and yet, in the same moment, he also wanted to conquer her—wherein he was essentially masculine—which is only another and more euphous and roundabout way of saying that he was magnificently inconsistent.

The conductor came along at this point and Guy belligerently demanded reasons why he had not been able to get a compartment instead of a measly section in a crowded car.

The conductor mildly explained that it was because all the trains were crowded, and you couldn't go to Chicago during a convention week without laying plans ahead. This annoyed Guy still more because it was so intensely reasonable.

He found a separate and distinct cause of aggrievement in every individual upon the car. A sanctimonious-looking person in clerical dress sat opposite, and the young man rang and ordered a cocktail in the deliberate hope of offending him. Behind, sat a fat woman much made up, and he opened a second window because she looked like the sort of person who needed fresh air but did not like it. The section in front was occupied by a slim little woman in shabby black, putting a limp handkerchief from time to time up under her heavy veil. Guy frowned at the meek back of her head, with its lit-

the knot of white hair showing under the veil, and told himself that people coming back from funerals were simply beastly to have around; but he felt uncomfortably sorry for her, just the same. The sanctimonious cleric and the fat lady were different. They glared at him from their respective seats, and he was conscious of the glares, and felt the better for them—also for the fresh air and the cocktail.

Nevertheless, he knew it was going to be a beastly trip. His father had wired him to come to Chicago immediately, and to bring certain negotiable bonds with him. It sounded rather mysterious and exciting, but then the governor was up to the neck in a lot of big new deals nowadays, and was always doing unexpected things. Guy wished that he had half the old man's nerve and grit. Of course, he had started at once, and the bonds, worth approximately forty thousand dollars, were in his pocket now. Old Arnold Madison dealt in five figures or nothing.

It was a warm, muggy, lowering evening, with a dirty stain of red in the cloud-piled west, and a damp feeling in the cindery air that rushed in past the dust guard at the window. Lights flew by dizzily like swarms of fireflies; the smell of the coal dust seemed as pervading as life itself; the dragonlike train thundered, snorting on, with occasional shrieks of inquiry on the way. Late summer had brought heat and drought, and the country, baked and dusty and dry, showed its thirst. The overcast sky held out the first promise of rain for a fortnight.

The fat lady behind him rang for the porter and snorted about the dust. The sanctimonious gentleman began to whine about the diner. The perspiring negro seemed likely to be torn in two among the travelers. A baby began to shriek, and its mother wanted to know if she could get some hot water to mix with Somebody-or-other's Baby Food.

Guy gave him his empty glass and half a dollar as he passed, and a faint gleam of gratitude illumined the dark and harassed countenance.

Just about then all the lights in the car went out. The brakeman, swearing huskily, went through with a lantern, and the porter returned on the jump with a long lighter and a hook with which to turn on the gas. The car was soon bathed in a doubtful, discouraged-looking glow, but all hope of reading was past.

A fuse had blown out, the swearing brakeman explained, on repassing. The porter put some screens in to protect the fat lady from dust, told the cleric the diner was four forward, and brought the mother a glass of hot milk.

Guy rose and repaired to the dining car himself, determined, if there was an empty seat, to preempt it ahead of the sanctimonious one. As he had already surmised, it was going to be a beastly trip.

As he passed the little lady in mourning, he saw her struggling with the window.

"Let me do that for you," he said gently.

She gave a little, soft sound which might have been a sigh of relief or an exclamation of protest, but he got the window open, and was thanked in a sobbing murmur.

"Poor little body!" he thought. "Probably just buried some child or brother or somebody. Beastly for a woman to have to travel alone when she's in trouble like that."

In the dining car he found a seat with his back to the engine—which, being as healthy as a young ox, he did not mind in the least—and in the course of time, the two weak-chinned little old maids who had been picking at macaroons and peach-pie, washed down by tea, departed, fluttering. Their places were taken by the sanctimonious gentleman in clerical dress, and a youth with whom he had forgathered—a pallid, slender fellow, whom Guy put down as a theological student.

"Or something beastly, anyway," he added mentally. "Might even be a missionary. Ugh! I'd hate to be a Timbaktu cannibal!"

He left the diner as soon as he could and went to bed very early. The rain

had come by that time, and he had to have one of his windows closed. Against the pane roared a deluge that sounded even above the noise of the train. The steady sound was soothing, and, not even caring that his feet were already soaking from the rain that came in at the open window, Guy tucked his big pocket case, with the bonds, under his pillow, and went to sleep.

He slept long and heavily, and woke with a curious sense of having been disturbed by something that ought not to have been. Just so a footstep will arouse one when a thunderclap will not. He was certain, as he sat up in bed, that something was not altogether right. His first instinct was to feel under his pillow for his pocket case with the bonds. The case was there, and he felt inside—yes, so were the papers. He tucked them back again, and raised the shade. It was still raining, and the dawn light stealing in had a gray and melancholy look. Guy had rarely waked to a more depressing morning, if it indeed could be called morning yet. His watch hands pointed to half past four.

Then he heard a startling sound—a sound which is unmistakable to ears that have ever heard it before: the click of a revolver being cocked. Guy made a hole between the curtains of his berth and looked out into the dimly lighted aisle.

There was only one gas jet burning, and that was at the far end of the car. The light, however, was quite sufficient to show him one of the most extraordinary pictures he had ever seen in his life.

The sanctimonious gentleman, sitting on the edge of his berth, was frozen apparently, in the act of passing a small packet of folded paper to the slim, young theological student. Frozen in the act, I say advisedly, for both the men were motionless and staring, paralyzed with terror, while, two feet away, steadying herself with one hand grasping the swinging green curtains of her own section, stood the lady in mourning—covering them with a revolver!

It was evident that she had not un-

dressed for the night, for she was still all in black, but she had taken off her hat and veil, and in the dim light Guy could see her snow-white hair. Her face was in shadow, but it needed no further light to see the quiet authority of her whole air.

"That will do, Matty Burkner," she said, in a clear whisper. "And don't try to move, McLaskey. I've got you both just where I want you. Hand over the papers!"

"My God!" muttered the "cleric," with bulging eyes. "Who are you, anyhow? How d'ye know us?"

"Never mind, Burkner, you haven't any time to waste. Come over, I tell you, and hurry up!"

"Gee! I know you now," broke in the younger man. "Well, I take off my hat to you! I always said you were a peach at the game, but how you spotted this little job gets me! We had it planted—"

"Don't talk," said the gray-haired woman in mourning. "This is my busy day."

Without a word, the "theological student" she had called McLaskey handed over the letter packet—then, with a ludicrous solemnity, he kissed his hand to it.

"Easy come, easy go," he said, with an unresentful grin. "Say, sister, it was a low-down trick to let us pinch the swag for you!"

The lady simply nodded, lowered the revolver, and pointed casually down the car.

"We're slowing up for Buffalo," she said. "I guess this is where you get off."

With miraculous speed, the two rascals collected their belongings and melted away. There was a humorous respect in the glance which the younger man flung at the lady crook, but the cleric still seemed stunned with surprise and terror.

"The biter bit!" said Mr. McLaskey, with a bow, and they forthwith departed.

Nobody boarded that particular car at Buffalo, since it was full already, so, fairly safe from interruption, Guy

wrapped a dressing gown about himself and climbed out to interview the light-fingered lady who had robbed him of his sympathies on false pretenses the evening before—robbed him as nefariously as she had robbed the two men of their "swag."

He emerged from his berth looking eleven feet tall in the gray dressing gown, and exceedingly stern, handsome, and boyish. When the lady in mourning saw him, she gave a little moaning cry, and swayed as though she would fall. Then she held out the papers toward him.

"I knew they were going to take them," she said simply. "The telegram from your father was a fake. I came on the same train because I knew that after they had stolen them I could frighten them into giving them up. There are the bonds—take them, for Heaven's sake!"

Guy, utterly bewildered, took the packet she was holding out. They were in truth his father's bonds—the same bonds which he had believed were at that moment reposing under his pillow!

"But—I looked——" he began.

"They probably had some fake papers of the same thickness," she whispered. "Oh, please—I think I'm going to faint!"

Guy caught her in his arms, and at that moment the white wig came off.

"*Eve!*" he cried, forgetting to whisper; and the fat lady in section 21 snorted indignantly, and made audible remarks about people who froze people all day, and kept people awake talking to people all night.

Eve Lansing, her brown hair tumbled and disordered from the wig, clung to Guy and sobbed a little, but she did not faint, after all.

They were in the last car, and the wearied porter had gone forward and fallen asleep, and Guy led her, unmolested, to the back platform, where they stood in the damp and cindery dawn, and she told him all about it, the while they pounded around curves and the country fled past them in the ghostly half light.

"They are both thieves who have worked with Claire and—and me," she said, as they stood on the swinging platform. "The younger one is the man who ran the automobile the time I stole the rubies. Claire planned this, too, but she weakened toward the end, and told me, and I got a wig, and a railway ticket, and a revolver, and came along. I knew about the telegram. And, oh, I'm so thankful—so thankful that I could save your property for you!"

Her gold-brown eyes were full of light; Guy could see them shining in the gray morning.

"So am I," he said, drawing her close. "But most thankful of all because—Eve, does it mean—most dear, does it mean that you are coming to me at last?"

There was a second's pause, then she raised the wonderful eyes to his, and their look dazzled him a little.

"It means that, if you want it, Guy," she said bravely; "if you are sure that you want to marry a girl who has been—a crook."

"If I'm sure, is it?" said Guy ineluctably. "Oh, my girl, my girl! So you picked this for your last job, Eve!"

She nodded, clinging to him.

"Do you know the old 'crooked mile' rhyme in the nursery books?" she said. "I've paraphrased it into a sort of chantey about me and my doings!"

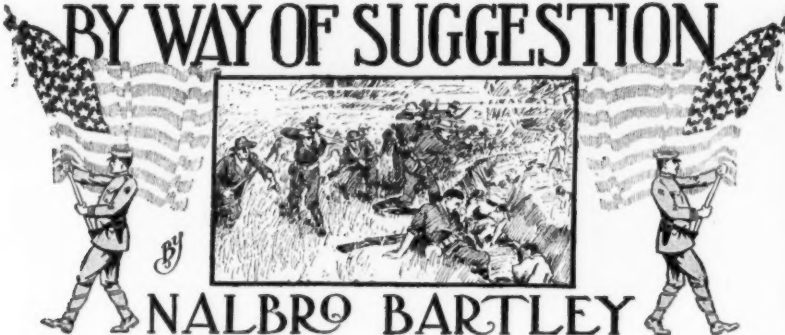
She recited, with whimsical expression:

"There was a crooked maid, and she went  
a crooked mile!

"Oh, there was a lot of it. I made it up ages ago, and down in my heart, even when I was absorbed and excited in it, I've thought of my life as a distance of long, 'crooked miles,' winding round and round, through all sorts of wild places. Oh, my dear—I think I've seen the last of my crooked miles. I think we're on the level, big, beautiful, open road at last—the road that runs quite straight!" Her voice broke, and there were tears among the gold glints in the brown eyes.

"Straight?" said Guy, as he kissed her. "Well, rather! Straight—to paradise!"

# BY WAY OF SUGGESTION



## NALBRO BARTLEY

**H**APPINESS is largely a trick of the mind," said Caldwell lazily. "Largely, Bounder." Bounder, the asthmatic English field chaplain, who had attached himself to the Zamboango district in Mindanao on pretense of studying conditions, panted a mild negative.

"Don't believe it, you know," he retorted tartly. "It can't be. You have to have realities, old man."

"Maybe." Caldwell had hopes of a decent argument. Hitherto Bounder devoted himself to writing special articles for foreign church papers, snapshotting forbidden things, and wrangling over the strength of his tea. "But I think yes. For instance—look at Al Purdy and his kids. Ever think of that, Bounder?"

"I cawn't see any connection." A nettled look came into the blue eyes. "He's done a very decent thing, you know, coming down here to teach the brown baby how to play. It was a fright before."

"But they were happy," supplemented the senior inspector maliciously; "and for the first few weeks that the play man tried 'em out with blindman's buff and hide and seek and fox and geese, they thought he was an evil spirit leading them astray from Allah. Now, didn't they? You bet yes. What did we have to order troops out for if it wasn't to make the Dato Danim understand quite emphatically that he could

not carve Al Purdy, that the Powers had voted to give Filipino children a little play life instead of going to work at seven years, committing crimes at twelve, and withering into useless man and womanhood at twenty-nine and thirty. So they sent down Al with his round of pussy-in-the-corner. And you see the result."

"Well, sir?" Bounder puffed out indignantly. "And what does all that prove?"

"What I said, happiness is largely a trick of the mind—what one is accustomed to. The average Mindanao kid was perfectly content to wallow in the mud with the carabao and get an occasional trouncing. He stared at his brothers and sisters with dull eyes, crawled about to avoid snake bites, and developed a keen appetite. But he was used to it. And he was happy."

"To-day, if there should be a law passed forbidding the playing of American games, every Mindanao youngster would howl till the rainy season. They have learned to love them, to expand, and develop. The Powers laid a firmer foundation for civilization than they knew when they patted Al Purdy on the back, and told him to give 'Cinderella' and 'Bluebeard' to all young Moros."

"That's true as far as it goes." Bounder became panting again, and he twisted his funny, fat self in the chair to stare at Caldwell. "But don't you think happiness depends on something else?"

"Some times, some places, some people. But, after all, it's the old story of 'What you never have you never miss,' isn't it? It all revolves around the feud theory of psychotherapy."

"God bless my soul!" Bounder stood up and beckoned to Doc Venners, who was supervising quoit games on the front lawn. "Come here. Here's a senior inspector, a trusted government employee who is wasting good imagination on a prosaic field chaplain. Caldly, you ought to write, discover a new drug, and use it as an opening wedge into the printed world."

Caldwell grinned. Doc Venner strode up on the veranda, beckoned a muchacho to bring some gin, and then turned inquiringly to Caldwell.

"Unload," he said laconically. "I heard some one say something about psychotherapy. Who's meddled with my library?"

Caldwell put his long, strong fingers back of his head in characteristic pose, and stared up at the dazzling blue morning sky, with its purple, threatening curtain of heat ready to be lifted in the midday hours.

"I merely said the state of one's mind depended largely on suggestion—the average person has a fobia of some sort or other, may be totally unconscious of it, would deny it hotly. But the fobia is there."

"Fobia?" snorted Bounder, crossing his absurd little feet clad in immaculate white linen shoes. "Caldly, you're going loco in the cabasco."

"Maybe. But I'm right. Now, listen, Bounder. If you ever did do active service in a parish—mark you, I said *if*—didn't you find every parishioner had some hobby or other which he fancied scarred his soul and lessened his chance of immortality; some secret trouble, some mystery, some fear?"

Bounder pursed up his lips.

"Yes—after a fashion," he admitted.

"Thanks, awfully," returned Caldwell dryly. "Well, every one who isn't an orthodox Episcopalian has a fobia, too. Every blooming head-hunter in the island has some particular heathen hallucination; but perhaps don't realize it.

Every man in service out here is nursing some dead and gone but throbbing memory. No one escapes. It's part of the game."

"But you know," panted Bounder, "I cawn't see the good of telling such things. It's only confoundedly confusing."

"That's where you're wrong," Caldwell pounced abruptly. "If the average person would realize what is worrying him, be frank with a trusting second person, his mind would be like early sunrise after a night of storm."

Doc Venner chuckled.

"They spoiled the makings of a damned good crank in you when they put on a blue suit with brass buttons."

"I haven't heard any vehement denials," returned the senior inspector shrewdly; "and you're great on a solo anvil chorus."

A short, thickset officer, wearing the uniform of a first lieutenant, came up the steps of the comandancia. His swarthy face showed the mark of a bad saber cut on the left side, and his black, dusky eyes opened and closed slowly as he talked. He had thin, delicately fashioned hands, with almost a woman's soft pinkness. When he raised them to brush back the wavy, dark hair with an unmistakable foreign gesture, the contrast with his face was noticeable. Yet his nickname was the Black Wap.

"It ees hot," he commented, with a sly look at the panting Bounder.

"Oh, Gar Laski," interrupted the army surgeon. "I want to ask about Manchuria. When you did service there, what did you live on during a march?"

"Eggs fried in dog fat," answered Laski slowly. "We hold our nose, take a drink of Chino whisky; down they go. Why?"

"Al Purdy was arguing about food supplies there, that's all. I knew you had seen service."

Laski smiled, his evenly modeled lips curved down slightly.

"Yes—I did service," he answered briefly.

Caldwell glanced at him quickly.

"You haven't seen Bert Putnam wan-



dering around, have you?" he asked. "I want to tell him something about drill."

"He ees at the Chino shop," Laski answered sarcastically. "He ees buying a blue satin mandarin coat."

"Mandarin coat?" gasped the three men simultaneously. "Who is she?"

Laski shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't know. Neither does he. He has a box—so big. In it he puts everything for a girl. A some-day girl. He says it ees for the future Mrs. Putnam. He says he likes the idea of putting things away for her. It keeps him straight."

"That's a pretty thought," said Caldwell softly.

"I bet drinks some bounding Moro belle takes possession before the time is out," laughed the army surgeon carelessly.

Laski drew his lips down into a droll face.

"It would be more sensible," he murmured.

"Come, come, Gar!" Caldwell put his hand on his shoulder. "Don't pour on the vinegar. Just because the Russian countess refused to go sleigh riding, you mustn't think all men have forfeited a right to romantic happiness. I wish every officer in the service had as much forethought as Putnam. That will mean a lot to him some day."

"Suppose there never ees a Mrs. Putnam?" suggested Laski. "Suppose a creese gets mixed up in Bert's back?"

"Then the box, with its mandarin coat and all, goes home to Putnam's mother, with a letter telling why. If for nothing else, that would be worth while."

The men were silent. Presently the tall figure of Al Purdy, play commissioner, was seen walking toward them. He carried a Moro child on his back, and a group of others tagged enviously beside them.

"Hi, yi!" saluted Purdy, dropping off his burden in the grass and waving a general dismissal. "Here comes the walking delegate for Mr. Froebel. Oh, Cald! Oh, Doc! Oh, Bounder! Oh, Laski! If you could have seen the dato

when I showed him his royal family playing Cops and Robbers. Talk about facial expression. Better than a moving-picture show. Thought I was teaching them mimic warfare. Thought I was trying to send their souls out of their bodies by violent running. Ye gods! Wait till I train some of the bigger chaps for mock Marathons. I bet you order out every man in call before we convince them it's only play."

"You've done good work," said Doc Venner warmly. "It seems a sight more homelike to go outside and hear them screaming: 'You're it,' 'My turn to hide,' instead of watching the mites lay stagnating in the mud."

Purdy stretched out on the porch swing, and nodded his appreciation.

"I'm the gladdest ever. I had a million qualms when I first started. If you had seen the pitiful stiffness, the gaping, stupid faces when I tried to give them the spirit of play. It was ghastly. It was as ghastly in its peculiar psychological way as to see a slave market of women. We don't realize what our American childhood meant to us."

Laski edged away. His face was turned toward the rising Capay Mountains, with their snow peaks and sloping green sides filled with grazing cattle.

"No, I don't suppose we do," mused Caldwell. "Every time we played hocky or made a home run in the town-team games, we were helping build up a thoroughly self-sufficient, well-organized manhood that could come out here and subdue savages."

"I suppose," stammered the Reverend Bounder, "that 'All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy' is your slogan."

"The same," assented Purdy. "Oh, by the way, Laski, there's trouble in the cuartel. One of the ponies is minus his bridle, and Tucalo is accused."

A slight expression of pleasure replaced the moody one. Laski moved swiftly down the steps, across the front of the comandancia, until he disappeared in direction of the cuartel. The men watched him. He had a magnetic personality, which both rebuffed and attracted.

"Laski is happy now," commented

the army surgeon. "Caldwell, have you ever noticed the positive joy in his heart when they are going to rush a fort or hang a few outlaws? How his smile is of seraphic sweetness if he is allowed to butcher as he wishes, if he can give the water cure and the third degree, and then forge ahead, taking the devil's own risk at being killed or tortured?"

"I have," admitted Caldwell.

Al Purdy raised himself on his elbow. "That's an odd thing. The other day Gar Laski raged round here like a wounded animal, insisting on still hurting itself against the bars. He swore at every pebble in his path. He sulked. He brooded. He ended with a glorious drinking bout. And if you can tell me the cause——"

"I can." Caldwell grinned as he saw the expression of rebellion on the Reverend Bounder's face. "The Black Wap is a true soldier of fortune. He will fight under any colors who pay him well, and offer him fair scope for his unusual ability. He has served with the Black Hussars. He has fought with the Boers. He has been in the Boxer campaign. He has stayed his two years in Texas; and God knows where else that we don't. He has run the gantlet of killing men under the protection of different colored flags. He has saluted deferentially to many waving banners. He has a dozen passports in his pockets now that he would use in case he chose to leave our constabulary and go with a new love. If to-morrow things cooked up good in Turkey, Gar Laski would resign, take his last peso to reach the Turks, and start in slicing. He does not fight for a purpose. He fights for the sake of the fight. He loves it. It is his mistress, his passion, his art, his religion."

"And yet," said Doc Venner softly, "there were tears in his eyes when his horse died."

"He's not cruel," protested Caldwell, ignoring Bounder's snort of disdain; "he is merely wrapped up in a painted film. He is not a living, breathing Gar Laski. He is an enslaved person who fights to forget; fights because he has nothing genuine with which to replace

it. His only happiness is in the hot breath of the dying opponent or the treacherous rustle of the approaching foe. That is a soldier of fortune. That is our Black Wap."

"Where do you suppose he came from?" asked Bounder.

"Ask something easy, like—Why is a hen?" Caldwell turned away in disgust. "How do you suppose I know? I don't look up birth certificates of the men sent to me. He's a non-commissioned officer, been decorated twice for field bravery, and a score of recommendations behind him, as well as a splendid education. Any one would know he came from good family. There isn't a raw thing about him. His hands are a blue blood's hands. He can rise up after a two-day drunk and take a major's wife into chow with an air which makes her forget every other man in the post. Yet he can wallow in the depths like a drug-crazed native or sulk like a mule."

"Is he a Pole?" asked Purdy.

"I've thought so. Laski may or may not be his name."

"There's a fine leather traveling case, with initials G. K. on the inside," observed the army surgeon; "and Laski isn't one to use another person's traps."

"What will become of Laski," asked Bounder eagerly, "when you've shot off all the Moros and he's bally tired of the tune of Dixie?"

"What will?" echoed Caldwell. "He'll drift on and on, more strange lands and unexplored seas, until he drops off unexpectedly, unknown, uncared for."

"Maybe he has a fobia," suggested Bounder, chuckling. "He may be deucedly uncomfortable inside."

"Quite possible," agreed the senior inspector. "If Laski would give Bert Putnam some of his nerve, and Putnam would retaliate with a little of his gentleness, we'd get two men the service couldn't afford to lose."

A half hour later, Bert Putnam, second lieutenant, climbed up the steps carrying a blue satin mandarin coat on his arm. He slipped into his room and laid it fondly on his army cot. Cald-

well, passing the door, looked in to smile.

"You're getting stocked up," he said easily, picking up the coat.

"I bought it cheap," explained Putnam, flushing. He was a thin, fair-haired chap, with a complexion which flooded crimson at a second's warning. "You see, Lung Lee has good things, and he—he wouldn't be apt to sell them down here. I—just got it."

"I see." Caldwell slapped him across the back. "That's a good idea of yours, Bert, picking up pretties in case of the future. It's a damned good idea when you stop and analyze the motive back of it."

Putnam started to blush his thanks. Outside, a group of youngsters began playing, "We've Come To See Miss Jennie-O-Jones," their shrill, high voices carrying the jingle distinctly. Caldwell saw the color leave Putnam's face and a dead white replace it. The clear, gray eyes closed as if in pain, and his shoulders quivered.

"Touch of the sun?" suggested Caldwell, knowing he was lying.

"Poor Jennie is a-washing. a-washing, a-washing.  
Poor Jennie is a-washing and you can't see her now!"

ended the first verse amid applause from the veranda.

"My head—tired——" mumbled Putnam, moving to the farther corner of the room, the mandarin coat crushed in his hands.

Caldwell watched him carefully. Outside, the reign of Jennie Jones continued. Jennie was ironing, sweeping, dusting, baking, cooking, mending, visiting, ill, dead. Then came the finale:

"Here's *red* for the soldiers and *blue* for the sailors,  
And *black* for the mourners of *poor* Jennie Jones!"

And a volley of mock sobs ended the play.

Involuntarily Putnam put his hands over his ears as if to shut out the sounds. Caldwell came closer.

"What is the matter?" he asked quietly.

"I hate their damned game," said the boy under his breath.

"Is that all?"

"That's all," he muttered, smoothing out the blue coat. "I've letters to write."

Caldwell slipped away.

"Now, why should Jennie-O-Jones, played by Moro kiddies, make Putnam shrink as if he had been beaten?" he asked himself as he rejoined the veranda group.

He made a mental note of the query, and told Purdy he thought they ought to play it more often; it gave the girls a good conception of American housewifery.

Three days later, Caldwell raised his head from an afternoon nap to listen to Al Purdy's bunch of prize "players" doing a new game—Little Fathers. It was a Russian conception of the English Jennie-O-Jones, with all the Slavic difference in temperament and action. The "Little Fathers" called to see the count at his castle. They found him busy with his serfs, punishing unruly ones. They found him at war. They found him hunting. They found him ordered to see the czar. They found him out a spy. They found him guilty. They found him being sent to Siberia to repent. They were a forbidding set of words to put in the minds of children; although Caldwell remembered Al Purdy telling about the necessity of giving savage children semisavage games.

A thud sounded in the next room. Caldwell stepped into the hall to discover the cause. He saw Gar Laski standing with clenched fists, shaking with rage, a set, desperate look on his face.

"What did this fall for?" demanded Caldwell, pointing to the heavy writing case on the floor.

The Black Wap shrugged his shoulders.

"The games," he said briefly. "I cannot write with the noise. I hate—the damned games."

"What—a kid game can make a man like you throw writing cases around and wrinkle up your alabaster brow, yet you

face a hundred dancing Moros with a pleasant smile?"

Laski turned away sullenly.

"I hate the games," was all he answered.

The first opportunity of testing his theory came to Caldwell a week later, when an inspector from Manila was staying at the post and Al Purdy had half the barrio children giving an exhibition. Caldwell requested that Miss Jennie-O-Jones be played toward the middle of the program, and Little Fathers following it. He seated himself between Putnam and Laski, and assumed a bored air. The Reverend Bounder, keen for an article on play work in Mindanao, was behind them, notebook in hand.

Putnam laughed with the rest at the first clumsy tries in doing drill work and circle games. He applauded, as did Laski, when they acted Puss in Boots in pantomime. Then came the middle number.

Caldwell turned his head ever so slightly, that he might watch his second lieutenant. At the first verse of, "We've Come To See Miss Jennie-O-Jones," Putnam drew away, as if he were making an effort to control himself. Caldwell could see the cords in his neck stand out painfully, and a deep flush cover his face. By the time the kiddies had buried their heroine, Putnam had pushed his chair back and left the circle on pretense of getting cigars. Caldwell gave a silent click of satisfaction. He was right. Putnam had a fobia. That fobia stood between the real Putnam and this girlish, slightly cringing lieutenant, whose sterling worth shone through the outer film.

Meantime a new circle was formed, and the opening note for Little Fathers pitched. The inspector from Manila nodded sleepy approval, and the Reverend Cheapstow Bounder made note of the fact. The fathers and mothers nudged each other proudly, while the troops grinned in amusement. The Dato Dinam gave a gesture of approbation, and one of the high priests was seen to smile as a mite of a Moro announced fiercely that "the count be go

a-hunting deer, a-hunting deer, a-hunting deer!"

But Gar Laski dropped his head on his chest and let his slender, sensitive hands lay tightly clasped on his knees. Caldwell was not watching the game. He was staring mercilessly at Laski, whose chest heaved unevenly and whose hands trembled. The children were singing about the count being taken away from his castle; now he was tried as a spy and found guilty; now he was sent to the cold north; now he was gone forever, and the castle was left lonely.

Laski uttered a foreign oath. He glanced up dangerously to catch Caldwell's steady gaze. He shrugged his shoulders, and turned away with an enforced calm. Caldwell moved his chair back, and asked something about physical-culture exercises. Meantime he added a second mental note to his fobia theory; the treacherous, nonchalant, brave first lieutenant hugged some smoldering thought close to his heart, ready to burst into flame at a moment's warning. It was this unrelenting memory, this unburied epoch which gave the first lieutenant his languid interest in the real progress of the islands, which made him crave the man-to-man combat, the tough wrestle of brute force. Caldwell caught himself smiling at the Reverend Bounder. Bounder mistook it for interest, and insisted on telling stories of Eton cricket matches.

The next morning from the north of the district came a wire that Guimba, the outlaw settlement, was in ripe progress. The fanatical leader, Paran, was leading in the progress, and some clear, tropical morning the American post would waken to find dripping heads of their men stuck on the outside picket fence, unless a night march through the cogon grass, and a desperate chance at making Paran have a military funeral, superseded it.

Caldwell handed the message to Laski, noting the effect.

"This ees good," he said merrily. "I can see the shooting up of all Guimba." His eyes glowed as he spoke, and he threw back his head with a gesture of determination.

"You're great on the shoot-up, aren't you?" Caldwell asked indulgently. "Never have any nice, fireside dreams of pretty, green farmlands and peaceful meadows."

"The peaceful times—they kill a man," was the answer.

"Laski, wait a minute." Caldwell put a detaining hand on his arm. "Suppose you didn't go on the Guimba expedition, suppose I send young Putnam to try his luck—it's a dangerous, a wild chance, and small odds at winning—you're too valuable to get messed off in a thing like that."

Laski's eyes narrowed.

"You send the Young Thing?" His voice had a note of incredulous contempt. "You would really send Putnam?"

"Why not? Putnam is a commissioned officer." The barb struck deep, as Caldwell planned it should.

"Commissioned? Yes." Laski's figure straightened. "Has he ever fought? No. He ees afraid. He ees a story-book officer, to drink tea the ladies pour, to save pretty things in a box for his bride. Bah!" He snapped his fingers in contempt.

"But Putnam is an American," was all Caldwell answered.

The first lieutenant was silent.

"You know there is something in the blood," drawled Caldwell slowly, "which makes a man fight for his own kind. You're a wonderful shot, Gar, and braver than a legion of ordinary officers. You create treachery in order to subdue it. But you don't fight because of the seventy-six spirit inside your heart. You can't. You've something vastly different, which you hug in secrecy. You fight as a means to an end. And you're square enough to want to do your best for the service in which you're enlisted. But you'd turn and fire on this post to-morrow if you thought the Moro ranks could offer more hazard and more gain."

Laski's face was a dull red, and his lips moved, as if he were trying to speak distinctly and failing.

"Yes," he managed to articulate. "This ees all you wish to say?"

"About all. Unless you want to talk. I'm no probe. You know that. Only I haven't served in the service of my country in blindness, Gar Laski. I haven't watched you serve in a swash-buckling, devil-may-care way without realizing the difference between bred-in-the-bone patriotism and hired service. You haven't let go of the past, Gar. You've burned your bridges, but you're wishing you could take a footpath back."

"You think I am disloyal?" Laski's eyes flashed dangerously.

"You'd face a regiment this minute if I told you to—but you're disloyal with the intensity of foreign birth, with the knowledge that your own land is barred you. Oh, Gar, boy, do you think I've fancied you some peasant with a good-luck star guiding him to the post of first lieutenant? Do you think I've watched you when they played the Russian game of Little Fathers without seeing the quiver it brought with it?"

"So." Laski's voice was calm, almost sweet. "So—you saw that."

"I didn't need the game to tell me there was something that made you try to be honorably killed, not caring which flag would be placed in the coffin."

"Little Fathers," said the first lieutenant softly. "God!"

"Don't you want to tell?" asked Caldwell, with almost childish directness.

"Tell?" Laski's voice had changed to a sob. "Tell—and for why?"

"If you don't want to," still with the simplicity which made one trust.

The first lieutenant turned fiercely in direction of his captain.

"I have not much to tell," he answered, with quick, sharp breaths. "Only the game was the first I ever learned. My father was a count—I am the oldest son. There ees nothing wonderful in that. The estates are gone, confiscated, ruined. It ees not the name of count I want. It was the game, the Little Fathers as we played it in the gardens. God, I can feel the hot summer sun as if it were an hour ago! My sisters played with me, my cousin—she was a princess. Oh, we laugh and play out hunting, play out all the verses un-

til the end—when they take the count away to Siberia, and we play he go across the snow, his feet bleeding." He paused, catching his breath.

Caldwell waited patiently.

"One day we were playing the game. I was getting old for such play; but it was vacation. I had come home for the summer, and I joined for the lark. My princess cousin played, too. Her hair was turned up, and she did not kiss me any more. We were playing—and they came to take my father.

"After a long time—many months—we heard he had gone across the long snow country. And his feet were bare and bleeding."

Laski turned away, his lips tried to whistle some popular tune. Caldwell clutched his hand.

"I'm sorry," he told him gently. "Laski, I'm sorry."

"There was a woman, too," Laski went on, glad that his pent-up silence had ended. "The princess."

"Some one else?"

"A woman must save her estate," he nodded. "She must not marry an exile. It was all arranged. But she cared—they told me she was crying when she went to the altar."

Caldwell hesitated, loath to break the train of memory.

"It brings it all back," burst out Laski passionately. "Ah, God, it brings it all back—the old garden, the peasants, my mother—Her! I can feel the breeze and hear the sound of the men singing. I can hear the sound of marching feet when they came to get him. And when the brown children croak about Little Fathers—it tears something inside." He tapped his chest. "It brings it back—and that is why you say I am no citizen." He faced Caldwell honestly. "I am telling you this as I would tell a priest in the confessional." His face was white with its intensity. "I don't care what I do or where I go, so long as I can fight, fight, fight. I cannot fight for the cause of those bleeding feet across the snow land. My hands are tied. But the fight ees here, ees bursting out into every thought, every beat of my heart. This ees why our people

throw bombs and wait with knives underneath their coats. I must fight—I must kill—I have nothing else."

"Laski, are you *lonesome* for a country?" Caldwell questioned.

The black, powerful head drooped. The womanish hands twitched to gain control of themselves. Then the tension snapped.

"A country!" he cried, holding out his hands appealingly. "A country! Caldwell, you don't know what it means to want a country. Am I not strong, brave, willing? But here, inside, something ees dead. It will not thrill at the sight of the colors. It does not care."

Caldwell's face quivered. The sight of the banished nobleman panting with suffering eagerness to gain the most sacred thing in the heart of men—a countryship!

"Some day, Laski, it will come," he told him gently.

Laski wheeled around abruptly and left the room.

Bert Putnam was on the trail of French Jew peddlers, who came through the territory with odd bits of Oriental junk, mixed in with a cheap assortment of New York and Chicago jewelry and perfumes. Putnam wanted a pair of slippers for his box. He had thought of those slippers ever since the mandarin coat was laid away; and he had endured the joshing from the post. One of the natives told him the peddler had wonderful Indian shoes embroidered with semiprecious stones. Accordingly, Putnam threw himself into the saddle, and cantered off toward the peddlers' tenting ground.

He walked through the outer bosque softly. The flap of the tent was closed, but he heard voices. The bosque was still in the late afternoon, the birds had not yet awakened for the evening, and the monkeys were busy with their early night meal. Only the soft swish-swish of the treetops and an occasional whining of some small animal broke the silence.

"Won," said a thick voice jocularly from within the tent.

"Won," answered Laski's voice in sarcastic contempt.



Some one pushed a chair back roughly.

Putnam pulled the curtains apart and stared in at the card game. Laski came forward.

"Spy," he whispered, snapping his fingers in the boy's face.

The peddlers looked on in amusement. It little mattered to them that the first lieutenant had been caught gambling, that such an offense meant instant dismissal from the service. One of the taller of the peddlers reached over to pour out a stiff hooker of raw whisky.

Putnam stepped back.

"Laski," he said softly. "Not—this."

"Tell!" was all the first lieutenant defied. "Tell—it ees not the first time. But I'll even up with you." And there was a hard glint in his eyes which warned Putnam that the slate would be wiped clean.

"I shan't tell before the—march to get Paran," he answered quietly. "You're needed there, Laski."

"And you won't be here to tell when we come back," was the response.

Putnam shrank, hating himself as he did so. He flushed as he saw the scornful look for his weakness. Something about Laski's hard personality brought out the lack of stamina in his own, as a photographer's brush brings to light the true effect of his negative.

"If you are afraid—tell now," Laski finished, with mock courtesy. "Be the coward, Putnam."

Putnam's hands closed tightly. The peddlers watched the scene with a lazy interest.

"I shan't tell until after the march," he repeated, steeling himself not to show fear. "I'm under oath as a commissioned officer to tell, Laski, but not till after the march—not till you've had the chance to get Paran to do something that might act as an antidote for—this."

"Then I'm safe," the first lieutenant announced jubilantly. "It'll be cold and lonesome lying in the trenches with the gugs."

He passed out to his horse without looking back at the others.

Putnam followed lamely. Somehow

he managed to mount his pony and ride after the other cantering one. He reached the living room of the post, and threw himself into a chair nervelessly. Laski gambling! No charge more serious, save direct treason or smuggling opium. Gambling! And Laski handled the government funds. The brave, dashing Laski caught red-handed in a peddler poker game. To the New England boy's simple scheme of ethics there could be no greater dishonor. To his whole-souled patriotism there could come no harder task than reporting his superior officer, to know that underneath Caldwell's stern exterior, his formally worded thanks, there would run a current of contempt which strong men held for those who turn telltale on their comrades. Yet he was under oath to tell. And Laski did not belong to the flag. He was a hired alien. Yet the Paran march was on, and Laski was the man needed for the fight, the one man who could come back dripping with the blood of the outlaw camp and yet triumph. Still Laski had gambled.

Putnam twisted about uneasily. Laski had said he would have no fear of being told upon after the Paran march. Laski meant but one thing. And he was fearless. Putnam gave an exclamation of fear. The old childish terror of giving pain, of seeing others hurt or killed, the haunting hallucination that some day he might play the coward in a crisis completely overshadowed him. Laski would have many chances to push him in the face of an uplifted sword, to throw a kampilian in his side, and march on unheeding; and he had said, had promised—

"We've come to see Miss Jennie-O-Jones, Miss Jennie-O-Jones, Miss Jennie-O-Jones."

The childish treble sounded like a cannon roar in his ears. He rose to his feet with a stifled cry of pain.

Caldwell caught him as he entered the room.

"I haven't been drinking, sir," Putnam kept repeating over and over. "I haven't been drinking, sir—it's the game, the damned game they're playing. I dream I hear them playing it. I can't

ever get away from it. I keep on and on hearing them play it. And remembering."

"What do you remember?" The senior inspector looked gently at the boy.

"I was a kid when we played that. It was a girl's game, and I played it because I was brought up with girls. The fellows laughed at me. But I didn't mind. I used to be the—Jennie Jones. I was only a little chap. One day I played it, and found out I was a coward. Seems queer to think a kid can be a coward—but I was. I was born with a yellow streak in me, and all the white part of me hating the yellow and wanting to get rid of it. We were in the yard of the school, and one of the chaps came up and laughed at me. I didn't pay any attention, and we went on with the game. By and by a crowd of kids gathered and kept up the laughing. You know how boys' rows start. I found myself called out, face to face with the one that started it. He was smaller than I. It wasn't the case of the proverbial bully. He was smaller and weaker—and he licked me, and I ran away. I was afraid. Cald, that has stuck to me all my life; it stuck to me all through school. They called me Miss Jennie Jones. Do you realize how kids can hurt each other?"

"During prep school, the thing sort of died down. I hugged my books and kept away from the crowd. It was the freshman year at college that it was started again, before I ever thought of going to the Point or being an officer. The same little chap did for me in the cane rush what he did for me in the old primary days. He began singing the thing. He lined up his side, and told 'em what to say to me. I went to pieces and deserted—and we lost the decision. I give you my solemn word, I never suffered as much in my life as during those four years in college. It was always Miss Jones—never Putnam. I've only been like a man since I've been out here. The insinuation of being a quitter stuck hard. It sounds awfully little to tell you this, petty and unimportant beside the big things men buck into—sort of a pin prick, with bad poisoning

results. But the results are there. It's that deadly fear of being a quitter, of running and being shot in the back, of letting the yellow streak tinge the rest. You don't know what that stuff is. But it's hell."

"Have you ever tried yourself out?" asked Caldwell impersonally.

Putnam shook his head.

"I'm living in the terror of having to be tried out. Oh, I don't mean rushing a bunch of gugs. I can do that. That's slapstick warfare, like the funny comedians who tell you you can get lame water at Cripple Creek. There's a bravado and a dash-bang about it that takes away a personal fear. You're in a crowd. But it's the cool, poised stamina which the government expects her men to have; the absolute self-control of themselves—that is what I'm afraid of. I'm afraid of Laski, Caldwell; afraid as death of him; afraid to be alone with him. I'm a cowering coward about him, and he knows it—now. He'll do for me." He broke off abruptly, and walked to the other end of the room.

Al Purdy came inside with a queer, excited look on his face. He held a telegram in his hand.

"Good God!" he said, in a little, weak voice. "Paran is marching toward us—on the rampage. He's out for the women and children, too. Cald, don't wait till morning. If he ever gets to Pantur, he'll slice it into ribbons."

The brown troops formed in the early evening, in the tropical darkness which flirts with daylight until it suddenly overwhelms and takes possession of it. Caldwell stood nursing his lame arm regretfully.

"I'm with you," he told Laski soberly as the first lieutenant's eyes met his with sudden sympathetic understanding, "even if I can't go, too. Laski, I want you to march *behind* Putnam. I want Putnam to take the lead, and let Tucalo bring up the rear line. Remember, it is Paran we want. The rest can go starve in the bosque. Get Paran and you break the spell." He turned to watch the pallor on Putnam's face.

"You said Laski marches behind —" he faltered.

Laski smiled. Caldwell nodded.

"Laski marches behind you." And his voice had a steel firmness which Putnam had heard before.

"In front of me," murmured Laski, pressing close.

Putnam's eyes half closed.

"I won't tell till after the——" he began; but the bugle sounded, and Al Purdy and the panting Bounder climbed on the veranda to cheer the line of regulars along.

Caldwell watched until the last cllop of the flat-footed natives died away.

"It will be a six-hour march," he mused; "six hours of letting Laski have free play with his blooming New England back. That'll change Miss Jones to Putnam, or else to a convulsive neurasthenic with an overpowering fobia." He turned away slowly. "But Laski—Laski needs a country, needs Putnam's good intentions and loyalty. What will it do for Laski?" Then the quick panorama of a native fight unrolled itself before his eyes. He, who had recently come back with the creese wound in his arm, knew too well how Paran might be laying in wait, might pounce on, and destroy, and utterly wipe out the regiment; might cut the wires so that no word would reach in time to send for help. Caldwell threw his head back determinedly. "I'm getting Putnam's damned fear stuff," he said jocularly; "it's contagious." He hailed the passing Bounder, who fluttered nervously from his litany to his notebook, and jumped at the slightest outside noise. "Play chess," growled Caldwell, "and tell me by way of suggestion that I'm not a damned, theoretic fool."

"You're bally deep," replied Bounder, glad of companionship. "I don't quite get you with this suggestive fobia stuff. People aren't interested in fobia things. They won't understand about them, you know. It takes an empty sleeve or a pair of heavy glasses to get the public-sympathy pulse."

"Oh, I shan't try writing about it,"

Caldwell assured him, wondering how his second lieutenant was stumbling along in the darkness, knowing that a dangerous man followed, secure in his position, probably contemplating one of a dozen ways to end the enmity for all time.

The first few moments of the march Putnam tried telling himself it was a horrid nightmare, such as he was liable to, that the crackling of the sharp grass and the swaying trees were hallucinations from which he should soon wake. Presently the monotony of the march sung itself into his brain, and he found himself tramping along, now crouching, now bending like a tin soldier with newly oiled mechanical works. Then came the reminder that close behind pressed Gar Laski, whose honor he held in his hands, whose record of striking straight the first time was yet unequalled.

Putnam knew what dishonor meant to Laski. Unconsciously he shared the foreigner's deep-rooted prejudice of being held without disgrace. And Putnam knew what gambling spelled in the service of his country. His mouth began to be hot and dry, and he found it difficult to swallow. He stumbled in the brush as he fancied he heard Laski's chuckle of amusement. He was wondering when he would strike. If he would wait until the actual fight, and keep his promise of shoving him into a trench grave. If the truth would leak back, if Laski would suffer the slow tortures of a tardy regret.

A thousand stinging thoughts of fear darted relentlessly through his mind. Now he heard the chorus of Miss Jennie-O-Jones as they had sung it to him at college in bantering, boy spirit. Now he was hearing it as Al Purdy's kids had sung it, stirring up the old feelings like sediment at the bottom of apparently clear water. Now he was listening to his own death cry; now he was trying to find a less-ruffled piece of the field to cut his men through.

Presently it dawned on him that he was leading the line. He, a second lieutenant. Up to now it was only the haunting, cowardly thoughts of his own

safety which possessed him. He had not realized that he held the entire detail of the march in his hands. To him, an under officer, a shavetail, Caldwell had intrusted the charge. And yet he was sneaking through the darkness, cowering for fear of one individual. All the barbarous opportunities which warfare offers to man presented themselves to him. The blood surged into his face—but not the cringing flush of a coward. It was his time to prove his worth, to prove the years of preparation for his service had not been in vain. He was leading the line.

In the dark he smiled, and squared his shoulders. He forgot Laski, an alien, a hired alien, who followed behind, busy with his nasty, self-repeating dogmas of revenge. He was marching for his country. He had been given the first place because the blood of Americans flowed in his veins. They could sing the childish games all they pleased now—he would join in the chorus. All the Gar Laskis in the world would only make him stand straighter and tramp ahead.

Snap, snap, crackle, crackle—  
br-r-r-r-r-r!

An old rifle hit one of the men in the middle of the line. Putnam heard his cry of pain with a savage glory. Paran had been in ambush. The fight was on. He turned to whisper to Laski, but Laski was gone. Into the cavern of awful darkness had leaped the short, thickset figure. The tall, well-proportioned shadows of the native troops could be seen occasionally as they fired or fell or crouched and struck. Paran's men, handicapped by poor rifles, retreated slowly, then advanced, then circled after the manner of jungle beasts tracking smaller ones.

Dark, relentless night veiled the scene. The swish of swords, the noise of guns, the smell of powder drove out the harsh, frightened clatter of the awakened wood inhabitants and the cool, sweet odor of the bosque. Putnam found himself fighting desperately with one of the enemy. He was wrenching his kampilian slowly from his hands. He was stretching the other's arm back

until it cracked ominously, until the steel blade fell to the earth and a heavy body hung limply over a broken tree stump. Then a cry rose up. It was Laski's voice.

"He ees dead," he said loudly.

A stillness fell over the field. Laski, his hands shimmering with crushed glowworms that the others might see he spoke the truth, held a body on high. The head was the outlaw's head, with band of rudely hammered gold.

"He ees dead," he repeated proudly, while Paran's men slunk black.

A new note was in his voice. Putnam noticed it. He forgot the gladness of his own victory over self. He forgot the duty to perform when the post was reached. He forgot Laski's threat. He forgot alien blood. He only knew Laski had cried out as he had never cried out before, that he had won for his colors a long-sought victory.

On the march back, Laski walked beside the litter carrying Paran's body. Once he turned to Putnam to say softly: "You were not afraid?"

Putnam did not answer. A blinding sob lay in his throat. The thought of what was to come overwhelmed him. Laski, brother officer, to be dismissed. Laski, hero of the day, to be disgraced.

Laski touched his elbow.

"For *our* country," he said, in the same soft tone. "By God, you were no coward!"

A second thrill of pain ran through Putnam's heart. He had awakened dormant patriotism in Laski by setting him the example of stoic calm.

At the post, Caldwell took the victory with little enthusiasm. He looked at the tattered, depleted troops, at Putnam, flushed and earnest, at Laski, calm and poised. Then he said briefly:

"Laski, you've been gambling. I've suspected some time. The funds are gone. Do you know about it?"

Laski's face grew white. He saluted gravely.

"He ees dead," he begged, pointing to the body.

"You've done the last thing for this country," Caldwell told him sharply. "It's move on."

The first lieutenant's hands dropped listlessly at his sides. His lip drooped. A rush of patriotism had flooded him in that dark, dreadful hour. As a great sorrow sometimes softens the most bitter of us, so that midnight strife, with the New England boy's awakened courage, had given to Laski what the empty, dreary years of wandering had deprived him of. He was proud to have fought for the stripes. Every step of the march back he had been resolving new ethics.

"I have a remittance," he began feebly.

Caldwell handed him an envelope with a French postmark.

"I opened your mail," he answered, "as you were under arrest. There will be no more remittances. The broker has failed."

Laski stepped back as if warding off a blow.

"The remittance has stopped," he repeated to himself. "It ees the end!"

"Of course," Caldwell continued. "If you can't make good the money, it means Billibid. If you could pay back instant, it would only be a dishonorable dismissal. You'd be free then to start a South American revolution."

Laski's face was dead white. He opened his lips to speak, but closed them. He looked at Al Purdy's distressed, sympathetic face, at Putnam's excited, startled one, at the Reverend Bounder, who was scratching his small, round head in perplexity. He glanced at the dead chief at his feet. "The last thing you will do for this country." This new, turbulent land, where alien races were taken close to its heart and fostered without prejudice. He suddenly remembered the thousands of his own people who found refuge here, who threw themselves on the mercy of these people, and were made one of them; the faithful, trudging peasants, whose intelligence was the butt of the aristocracy's wit—they came with stolid faith to make themselves citizens. Their children were taught only the new-world principles, their children were found to stay contentedly in their new land. They were no rovers, no seekers

of fresh fields or explorers into the past. And he, a ragged nobleman, a petty count, had cheated!

"It ees too late," he said out loud, slowly. Then he turned to Putnam. "You did not need to tell," he added, with a flash of the old humor.

Caldwell looked at the second lieutenant understandingly.

"Was that why?" he asked.

Putnam nodded.

"I'm not afraid any longer, sir." He raised his hand to his hat to salute. "I led my line."

"I thought you would." Caldwell's voice had an indifferent ring. The pleasure of curing Putnam of the fever was lost in the knowledge that Gar Laski was a military criminal.

As they went inside, Laski turned to say quietly:

"It ees too late. I have learned to know my country only to lose her. I watched the boy. He ees worth while. Everything in my life has come too late—even my country."

Caldwell bit his under lip.

"Gar, if it wasn't for the funds——"  
"Ah, but it ees the funds," flashed back Laski. "I have gambled before and put it back. All my life I have gambled. I have never cared. I have laughed at the trick because it passed away the time when there was no fight. Coming back with Paran's body, I made up my mind never to touch a card, to try to live up to the country whose——" He shrugged his shoulders with a pitiful attempt at buoyancy. "All the Little Fathers in the world mean nothing to me. That—has gone."

Caldwell followed him into his room. He was waiting to take him to the cuartel barracks to wait until the Manila steamer should sail. Laski put his hand into a bag, and drew out a tattered leather case of unmistakable foreign make. He opened it as he handed it to Caldwell. It was a wonderful sapphire ring set round with tiny pearls. There was a cunning locket back of the stone which opened with a spring. Laski pulled out a tiny picture, and dropped it into the flame of a lighted match.

"Give it to the boy," he said quietly.

"He gave me my country—even at the eleventh hour."

"Putnam?" questioned Caldwell.

"For his box. Just this to Putnam. The box for the some-day bride."

Laski turned away. Caldwell saw that his shoulders were shaking.

Putnam came in to Caldwell and laid a package on the table.

"If Laski has his deficit made good, you'd pardon him, wouldn't you?" He looked sharply at the senior inspector. "He's one of us now, you know."

Caldwell unwrapped the package.

"Where did you get this money, Bert?" he demanded sternly.

"It's mine," the boy answered doggedly; "and I didn't gamble or steal or borrow. A fellow isn't brought out of the boggy-man kinks like I was during the march for Paran without feeling some faint glow of gratitude. It was you who planned it, Cald; but it was Laski who tramped behind."

Caldwell's long fingers tapped on the table edge.

"I won't ask you any questions," he promised. "I'll—let you pay Laski your debt."

"And Laski's safe?"

"Laski's safe." Caldwell smiled. "Laski tried to pay you, too," he added.

"You mean the ring?" Putnam flushed. "I know. It was white of him all through."

"You showed him the stuff our men are made of. Take a man's opinion of contempt away from him, and you find either a hopeless vacuum or a respect which has come to stay."

Then Caldwell told Putnam to brace up and be a man, not to stand staring at him with an idiotic, delighted expression. He went out to find Laski. He began talking to him with all the symptoms of a district visitor. He was telling him firmly that he could be reinstated, that he could pay the money back to Putnam little by little, that he must give his word of honor to pass up the cards; even a domino would be regarded as a grave suspicion. He was telling him that better men than he had

served in Billibid, that better men than he had more gruesome skeletons in their closets, that his country needed him, his new-found country, that this was merely a stimulus to prove the dearth of a threatened loss.

And Laski was listening—listening with the relieved calm which follows a tempest, trying to grasp clearly the fact that Putnam had gone good for him, had probably sacrificed his last dollar to save a fellow officer. This was loyalty, this was patriotism. And he had so undervalued it, so carelessly endangered it!

A fat figure burst into the room. It was Bounder. He held a tattered leather case in his hand.

"I say, it's a bally shame," he began excitedly. "I'm going to make the best play I can for him. Lung Lee will give me——" He was talking as if Laski were not present.

"Where did you get that ring?" demanded Laski sternly, the man in him forgetting the newly pardoned soldier.

"What the hell have you been doing?" Caldwell looked at the floor. A dirty king of hearts fluttered out of the reverend's pocket.

Bounder flushed like a two-year-old.

"I've been playing poker," he said explosively; "stud. By God, I forgot the cloth and played! It was the Jew peddler gang, and I took a chance. They were wiped dry of money by some one else. Some one had sold the ring underprice—it's a wonderful stone. You can see for yourself. But I played for it. Lung Lee will make good."

Caldwell chuckled.

"So Putnam sold the ring, and you played for it; and it's just a jig-saw puzzle, black and white."

Laski was smiling—there were tears behind the smile.

"It ees the ring that saves me, after all," he said brokenly. "Her ring—not the flag."

But Caldwell was laughing at Bounder.

"You gambled," he snorted. "You sat down and gambled; why, you pugilistic, confounded old son of a gun!



And I never thought you had the makings of a decent checker player. You played—for Laski!"

"S-sh!" Bounder wiped his forehead nervously, still ignoring the third person. "Caldy, it's the damned kid game that gets me raw. They sing that 'Take a Chance for Lunnon Town' until my blood has a Marathon. I haven't always had the title reverend, Caldly. That was the popular tune at Brighton years ago. I would win like a meadow lark if I heard them playing that. Out here—it got me after all these years. Fawncy what the bishop would say. I was waiting for a ripe time, and Laski—sug—suggested it."

Bounder sank into a chair, looking very much ashamed, as if his richest parishioner had sent for him and he couldn't come. More cards trailed out of his pockets.

Laski closed the leather case reverently.

"The ring," he murmured; "after all, it ees the ring."

"We won't let the boy ever know," Caldwell said soberly as he stopped between roars to promise Bounder secrecy. "It will be a wonderful thing for him to remember—like the box for the some-day girl. Don't you see? It would be wrong to let him think the tangle would have been done away with, anyhow——" Caldwell caught himself.

Laski smiled.

Caldwell put his arm on his shoulder, ignoring the panting Boander.

"Laski, remember something, too, will you? I wouldn't have let a man who killed Paran single-handed in the dark gone to Billibid's treadmill. But I wanted to see if the fobia, if the Little Fathers had been safely banished. You know I might have had a suggestive fobia myself; and if I had listened to Al Purd's kids warbling, 'Let's rob the birdie's nest—*what* do we find.'" Caldwell shrugged his shoulders.

There were unashamed tears in Laski's eyes, so he did not need to answer.



## THE CATHEDRAL

WITHIN the dim cathedral of the pines  
The snowy birchen tapers stand alight,  
Far-aisled, with lifted flames of leaf-spired gold,  
While gray and old  
The verger autumn wind slips through the night.

Soft-robed in frost-starred vesture mid the dusk,  
With moon-pale arms, dim Autumn's acolyte  
Swings smoke-sweet censers through each grass-brown glade,  
And from the shade  
The hills bend near, close-veiled in moon mist white.

While clear and sweet from oak-empaneled choir,  
By gray and wind-bared branches screened from sight,  
The sudden song of shadow-cleaving bird,  
Far distant heard,  
Breathes benediction through the fading light.

MARTHA HASKELL CLARK.



# The Society Reminiscences of FREDERICK TOWNSEND MARTIN

## CHAPTER XIII.

### PRESENTATION AT COURT AND NEW YORK SOCIAL WINTER.

**A**FTER about a year of varied traveling, in which my brother Howard and myself had some of the most pleasant, and also some of the most harrowing, experiences of our long sojourn abroad, we took ship for America with hearts full of joy at returning to our native land.

After a few days in London, on our return from the Ascot meeting described in the previous chapter, we went to Norway, where we spent the summer in some of the most delightful nooks I ever have visited. From Scandinavia we went to St. Petersburg, thence to Vienna, and Trieste, whence we took boat for Alexandria. While touring the Holy Land I was taken ill with typhoid fever, and for several weeks lay in a hotel in Beyreuth hovering between life and death. We left for London as soon as I was able to travel.

While waiting for our steamer to sail I was presented at the Court of St. James for the first time. Weak as I was, the excitement of the event stimulated me like wine, and throughout the whole time I felt as well as ever. For the presentation I was indebted to Judge Pierpont, who was then the American minister to England. As I have said before, Queen Victoria at that time left as many of her social obligations as she

possibly could to her son the Prince of Wales, the late King Edward. On the occasion at which I was presented the prince held court in the old St. James Palace, amid the pomp with which the British kings have received their subjects since the earliest times.

Finally we left London, and took boat from Liverpool, arriving in New York after an uneventful voyage.

We were met at the docks by my elder brother Bradley, who, to my surprise and distress, told me that my father had some time previously fallen and broken his hip—a very serious matter at the age of seventy-five—and was confined to his bed at home in Albany. I had had no news of this, as it had been thought unwise to tell me anything about it so soon after my own illness.

As soon as I had arranged my affairs in New York I went to Albany, where I remained with my father from the early spring until the late autumn. All during these months I would sit by the hour and talk of my experiences abroad. What sympathy he showed me, and what a deep and affectionate interest he took in my story, listening to every little detail of my adventures and travels! Sometimes after these conversations I would leave my father's room to join for an hour the companions of my younger days in Albany, and nothing astonished me more than their lack of interest in all that I had seen and done. Their lives seemed to have stood still where I had left them, and in order to

interest them I had to take up the thread of events where I had dropped it on leaving for Europe.

During my father's convalescence we made a number of pleasant visits to relatives and friends, and in the autumn I found myself settled permanently in my comfortable quarters in New York, as my elder brother and his wife at that time lived in my father's house in Albany. I was therefore free to live where I pleased, and thus was presented to me the opportunity I had long looked forward to—that of settling in New York. From that day to the present time I have made my home in this most interesting of all cities.

It was a real pleasure to meet again the many friends whom I had known before I went abroad. One of the first that I met in the club was Mr. Ward McAllister, who, as will be remembered, showed me many kindnesses in my early youth. He apparently was anxious to do everything in his power to make my life there agreeable and pleasant. Also do I remember the cordiality of Mrs. William Astor, who smilingly said to me that she would do all she could to prevent my feeling homesick for my home in Albany. To the day of her death she kept her promise, and all that time was one of my best friends.

I soon found, however, that in order to enjoy life in my new surroundings I should immediately have to enter into the lives of those around me rather than expect them to enter into mine. Even at that early age I had to learn the lesson which most people must learn—that in order to be happy one must forget oneself and enter into the lives of others. I speedily became aware that my friends in New York did not want to hear of Europe or of anything that was not immediately concerned with their own doings.

On all sides of me I heard society talking of the last great event that had happened in the fashionable world of New York. This was the famous fancy dress ball that had been given at Delmonico's, in Fourteenth Street, while I was away on my travels. Over this topic their enthusiasm never waned. As soon

as I asked of it the expression of boredom, which their faces wore while I related my adventures in foreign countries, gave place to smiles full of interest, their faces lightened up with pleasure, and again the story would be told of the costumes worn by the various celebrated beauties who had graced that ball with their presence.

Then, too, I heard how Mrs. Griswold Gray, who not long since had been married, went with a few others, who, like her, were unable to go to the ball to visit Mrs. Belmont beforehand, so that they might see some of the costumes to be worn.

I remember Mr. Belmont had said to Mrs. Griswold Gray:

"I am sure you will never guess what my wife's costume is going to be. It is something astonishing—incredible!"

Mrs. Gray replied at once: "Now, I know! She is going as 'Incroyable.'"

And at this moment Mrs. Belmont entered the room arrayed in the costume of that very character!

By degrees I learned all the details of this fabulous ball, as well as though I had been present. I knew that Miss Annie Schermerhorn went as a flower girl; that Miss Minnie Stevens, who afterward became Lady Paget, went as Cleopatra; Miss Helen Beckwith as a Greek slave, and Mrs. Wildman, who was a Miss Strong, as a pussycat. I was told that Miss Elsie Barlow went as an Eastern princess, and that Mrs. Henry Chaplain, who was a Miss Jay, went as Mary Queen of Scots.

Miss Stevens, as Cleopatra, was decked with all the jewels her mother possessed, and a great many others that she borrowed from friends. With these gems she appeared in such a blaze of priceless treasures that the marveling guests asked Miss Stevens where she got so much handsome jewelry.

Meeting my good friend, Mr. Jules Montant, one day, he laughingly remarked to me:

"They are all talking about this ball at Delmonico's, but the social world must remember that my grandparents gave the very first fancy dress ball that was ever in New York.

"That," he added, "was in eighteen-twenty-eight, and the ball created a great sensation. My grandparents were among the earliest French families who settled in this country."

The importance of Mr. Montant's family will be appreciated when it is understood that Charles X. of France was godfather to one of his ancestors. His grandfather, Charles De Brugière, came to America at the time of the revolution, in 1795, leaving his handsome Château De Farsac. He was then twenty years of age, and shortly after his arrival he married the beautiful Mademoiselle Heloise Teisseire. He then built a charming home in New York, on Bowling Green, facing the bay, where now stands the great Produce Exchange.

"These distinguished French people," continued Mr. Montant, "made a great impression upon the colony, and the prestige and power which the family had enjoyed in France at once secured for them a distinguished position in their new home.

"Among the guests at the ball at the Bowling Green house was the celebrated cantatrice, Madame Malibran De Beriot—one of the greatest singers that the world has known. Visitors to the foyer of the great La Scala of Milan will see the beautiful marble memorial erected to her memory. On the occasion of her visit to America she delighted New York with wonderful concerts in the old Bowling Green Theater."

This theater mentioned by Mr. Montant, by the way, was the same in which years afterward the great Jenny Lind delighted the people of New York with her flutelike voice.

One of the most brilliant affairs of the season of 1876, about which I heard a great deal in New York, was the marriage at Grace Church of George Victor Drogo, Viscount Mandeville, to Miss Consuelo Yznaga, daughter of the well-known Spanish leader in New York business affairs.

Lord Mandeville had arrived from England shortly before the date fixed for the ceremony. He had previously visited America several times. On his

last visit he had remained three months, for he had fallen desperately in love with Miss Yznaga, and was determined to win her. He was first brought conspicuously before the public through his skill at polo.

Every vacant place in the church was filled a long time before the ceremony commenced, and all looked with eager eyes for the arrival of the bridal party. The party was led by Mr. Yznaga and the bride, followed by the groom and bridesmaids, Miss Minnie Stevens, Miss Kate Kernochan, and Miss Natica Yznaga, with the groomsmen, Colonel William Jay and Sir Bache Cunard. After the party had taken their places within the rail, the Reverend Doctor Morgan Dix performed the ceremony. The following gentlemen acted as ushers: Messrs. Bell Sherman, Walter Crane, and Yznaga—the last-named being the brother of the bride. During the ceremony the bridesmaids were arranged to the left of the bride, Colonel William Jay, best man, to the right, and the groom and the bride's father stood behind Colonel Jay. The bride was given away by the father.

The front of the bride's dress was of white satin with point lace, and the back was of satin damask, while the waist was of the same material, with open squares. The sleeves were striped with satin and pearls. The bride also wore in her hair several brilliant diamond stars, and over the whole a point-lace veil.

The bridesmaids were dressed in white tulle, with white wreaths covered with white tulle veils. In their hands they carried bouquets of white lilacs.

Among others present were Mr. R. L. Cutting and wife, Mr. and Mrs. Maturin Livingstone and two daughters, Mrs. J. P. Kernochan, Mrs. Walden Pell, Mrs. T. H. Newbold and daughters, Mrs. W. A. Hadden, Mrs. Barlow and daughter, Mrs. J. T. Johnston, Mrs. Cornelia W. Lawrence, Mrs. James W. Otis, Mrs. John Dix, Mrs. Morgan Dix, Mr. Royal Phelps, Mr. Leonard W. Jerome, Mr. James Gordon Bennett, and Sir Bache Cunard.

After the ceremony the party pro-

ceeded to the residence of the bride's father for the usual reception.

This event recalls to mind another important event in the social calendar of the following year, at which a European noble also was the guest of honor.

It was a grand ball given at the Brooklyn Navy Yard for Duke Alexis, who was visiting New York. All New York was present, and took part in the procession which passed through the reception hall. It was really a great national affair, for with the fashionable people of New York society were mingled leaders in army and navy life, diplomats, and many prominent politicians, including Baron Schilling, the Russian minister.

Belleship was still in fashion in those days, so on my return from Europe I naturally heard much of Miss Helen Beckwith, one of the last to hold the commanding position of "belle of New York." As a girl she had a wonderful opportunity, for her father, a leader of society, a member of the Committee of Patriarchs, and a man of great financial influence, could give her an enviable place in society. When Miss Beckwith was only seventeen years old her father was sent to Paris to represent the American government at the Exposition of 1867. During their stay his two daughters, Miss Helen and her elder sister, became the talk of the whole French capital, and became known throughout the whole fashionable world of Europe as typical New York beauties.

While in the French capital they were taken up by the Emperor Napoleon III. and the Empress Eugénie, and speedily took the position as the leaders of fashion among all foreigners. They were more fêted than any who visited Paris during the empire, being such favorites of the emperor and empress that they attended most of the state affairs at the Tuileries. Later in life Miss Helen Beckwith married Lord Leigh, of Stoneleigh Abbey. Many times since those days of her first triumphs she has delighted me with stories of the brilliant life at the Tuileries.

Mrs. William Schermerhorn was another of whose wonderful entertain-

ers every one was talking of. Any one received in her charming home in West Twenty-third Street was sure of meeting the descendants of the oldest families of the colonial days. She was one of the most delightful hostesses I have ever met. Her natural dignity, together with her kindness of heart, was apparent in her every feature, and all her entertaining was done without any apparent effort. Her accomplished daughters, all lovers of music, added much to the charm of those brilliant receptions and to the popularity of their mother. I cannot help but compare the leisure and repose of people in those days with the rush and bustle of New York life nowadays.

I remember asking Mrs. Paron Stevens one day what was requisite for success in the social world. She replied to me:

"My dear Mr. Martin, the trouble with people in the social world now is that they want to be treated as the Queen of Sheba. They would enjoy life so much more if they would only be natural, taking interest in all those about them, and thus drawing out sympathy from others, rather than arousing antagonism by demanding too much."

If belleship was declining at that time, leadership was not, for at the receptions of Mrs. August Belmont, senior, social destinies were cast, just as inexorably as in any European court, and, indeed, the receptions themselves could not be improved upon in any foreign court. Naturally invitations were keenly sought, and the first thing anybody from abroad or from other cities at home did on visiting New York was to obtain letters of introduction to the Belmonts.

All who met Mrs. Belmont could not help but feel that she was born to grace any salon in the world. Born of a long line of leaders in their chosen careers, the leadership of society fell on her naturally, and was held with grace and ease.

The Belmont home in Fifth Avenue—long since demolished by the encroachments of commerce—was celebrated as containing one of the first great picture galleries of New York.

In those days the homes of the various branches of the Astor family were considered as among the most interesting in the city. Mrs. William Astor lived at the corner of Thirty-fourth Street, and Mrs. John Jacob Astor at the corner of Thirty-third Street and Fifth Avenue. Both of these houses were in their day regarded as ranking among the show places in New York. Both are now demolished, and the great Waldorf-Astoria Hotel stands in their place.

There was a great difference in character between Mrs. William Astor, formerly Miss Schermerhorn, and Mrs. John Jacob Astor, formerly Miss Gibbs. The one desire of Mrs. John Jacob Astor was to improve the political and literary standard of that day. A woman of the greatest social and intellectual attainments, and an accomplished pianist, her delight was to gather together all the brilliant, artistic people at her receptions and musicals. These receptions were wonderful gatherings, and the guests included diplomats and statesmen, as well as the social leaders of New York.

Her sister-in-law, Mrs. William Astor, was a woman whose social triumphs were gained through her great personal popularity. Her greatest charm was her gentleness of manner, and she invariably did her utmost to make her guests happy.

While living in New York that winter, after returning from Europe, I first heard that Mrs. Belmont felt that her strength was not equal to the great strain of her position. I have always had an idea that perhaps this was the reason which caused Ward McAllister to exercise his influence to make Mrs. William Astor the leader of the so-called Four Hundred.

Whenever Mr. McAllister entertained during Mrs. Astor's leadership he took her into supper, and in all other ways made her the lady of distinction. But he was only one of her faithful subjects, for until she herself retired from the social world on account of ill health, she was generally taken into dinner by the host.

Another entertainment of that memorable winter was almost, if not the last dance that the beautiful Mrs. Pierre Lorillard gave in her home in Fifth Avenue. Never did she look more brilliant than that night, dressed all in white, with her wonderful black hair and sparkling dark eyes. With her natural dignity and commanding figure, she received like a queen. The governor general of Canada, Lord Dufferin, came specially from Ottawa to attend this dance, and in the joy of this his first cotillion in New York he soon forgot the responsibilities of his exalted position. I can see him to this day moving with the strength and grace of a boy. Many years afterward, when he was British ambassador to France, he spoke to me of that delightful entertainment.

Pierre Lorillard was the first American to win the Derby, but to American minds the greatest monument to his name was Tuxedo Park. The conception of this institution was entirely due to his initiative, and to him is due the gratitude of those who were afforded the opportunity of building charming homes around the beautiful lake, where before existed only an uncultivated forest.

The Lorillards had, beside their house in New York, a lovely cottage at Newport, called "The Breakers." This was one of the earliest so-called "cottages," which were in reality splendid palaces, built there. It was afterward sold to the Cornelius Vanderbilts, subsequently only to be destroyed by fire.

Another brilliant dance was given that winter by Mrs. Reeves, in her home just off Washington Square—a house to which every one was delighted to receive invitations, and which represented the old régime of New York.

Another most agreeable hostess was Mrs. James Kernochan, formerly a Miss Lorillard. She was one of my first friends in New York, and the kindness she showed me in my boyhood will never be forgotten. And now, after all these years, nothing delights me more than to see her, and talk about those happy, bygone days, of which the younger generation knows so little.



At that time the scale of society in New York was small compared to that of the present time. Nowadays if one were to invite all one's friends to a reception, there would be no house in New York large enough to receive them. In the days of which I speak one knew every one in the room at most of the charming dances. If one's home had only a twenty-five-foot frontage it was ample to give a cotillion to one's small coterie of friends, and, too, we knew almost everybody that passed by in a carriage on the avenue, whereas nowadays one can go for blocks and blocks without meeting a single human being that one recognizes.

The memories of the first winter that I lived in New York crowd upon me, but I cannot close this chapter without recalling my meeting with Mrs. Van Rensselaer Cruger, who early in life had married Colonel Cruger, a man of great distinction, and the trustee of the important fund of Trinity Church. He was a great power in the social world, as well as an important factor in finance. Mrs. Cruger was the great-niece of Washington Irving, whose books had fascinated me from boyhood. Mrs. Cruger loved to tell of her uncle and his charming little home, "Sunnyside," in "Sleepy Hollow," which no doubt many of my readers know to this day. This rambling and romantic cottage is covered with ivy, and commands from the lawns of the garden an exquisite view of the Hudson, about which the great author was so fond of writing in his later days.

I especially remember the story of how Irving once sent for Mrs. Cruger's mother to come up and spend the afternoon with him, in order to help him entertain the exiled Prince Bonaparte, Louis Napoleon. The prince, after his visit, returned to New York by the river, and they pointed out to him the stately country homes along the banks, owned by the important families of those days. When a few days after the fête Mrs. Cruger's mother saw her uncle again, he said:

"Seeing you wandering about these grounds with young Bonaparte, I won-

dered if fate would be kind to him, and place him some day on the throne of France."

Mrs. Cruger added that when the prince was proclaimed Emperor Napoleon III. her mother was received at the Tuileries. As she curtsied to the emperor for the first time, her thoughts flew back to that afternoon at Sunnyside, when she had walked with the exiled prince!

Mrs. Cruger would also tell me how Washington Irving, when minister to Spain, had many times danced upon his knee the pretty little Montijo girl, who was afterward destined to become the wife of Napoleon III., and to take the title of Empress of France. Washington Irving kept up his friendship with the Empress Eugénie until his death.

When first I met her, Mrs. Cruger was one of the younger married women of fashion of New York. She was constantly entertaining, and knew well how to surround herself with interesting people. Indeed, she understood the social world to the tips of her fingers. One of her fêtes is talked of to this day. It was a real "fête champêtre," held at her country home, near Roslyn, Long Island. Having spent many years of her earlier life in France, she knew well how to arrange the affair, and under her guidance every detail was carried out with such perfection as to give an exact reproduction of a real French rural fête.

Mrs. Cruger also enjoyed telling of her young days in the social world, when the lively set—a little clique of charming girls, popularly known as "The Bouncers"—came into prominence. By their wit and charm of manner they captivated the social world of New York. Wherever the "Bouncers" went, life, gayety, and fun went with them, which, of course, meant success to an entertainment. They included such interesting characters as Elsie Barlow, Minnie Stevens, Dora Fair, Bessie Billinger, Margaret Gandy; also Consuelo Yznaga, who afterward became the Duchess of Manchester. All these charming women settled well in life. Margaret Gandy married Lawrence Perkins, Minnie Stevens married Sir Arthur Paget, Elsie

Barlow married Stephen Henry Owen, and Dora Fair married one of the Riggs family, of Washington.

Mrs. Cruger also had attended and cleverly described the famous Artists' Ball at the Academy of Design, which was one of the most magnificent entertainments that New York society had ever known at that simple time. Those desiring to read a realistic description of it cannot do better than consult Mrs. Burton Harrison's novel, wherein this scene is so wonderfully pictured.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### NEWPORT AT ITS BEST.

I spent the summer after my return from Europe at Newport, visiting the mother of my friend, Henry Sands. It was one of my happiest summers, for there I met old friends, made many new ones, and saw much of my sister, Mrs. Davies, who had just bought a home at that beautiful place. Newport is different from any other fashionable watering place in the world. There is absolutely no hotel life there, for the place is simply a collection of charming homes, from the rose-covered cottage to the stately seaside palace. Foreigners could have no idea of the delightful social life which exists in this place, unless they received an invitation to visit some of the homes of the people who make it famous.

Whenever the question of building hotels arises, or a group of capitalists starts such a project, the scheme is always opposed so actively by the land-owners of Newport that up to this day no one has been able to lay the foundations of a large hotel such as makes the life of European watering places what it is.

Newport is a place to go to meet friends rather than to make friends. Any one living in a hotel at Newport as it is now, and always has been, would feel to such an extent the existence of an insurmountable social barrier that they would have the disagreeable feeling of being left out of things. They soon would doubtless prefer to pass on to

some place where the less exclusive hotel life was a feature of the resort.

The occasion of my summer visit to Newport was marked by an event in the sporting world—the first appearance of a pack of hounds—a hunt having been formed for the first time in the history of this neighborhood. The fashionable world much enjoyed the excitement of attending these meets, for the surrounding country was very rough, and, for any one who followed straight, about as dangerous as could be found.

I can smile now as I recall an experience during that summer while riding to the meet. I was having a pleasant conversation with one of the ladies of the party when suddenly the cry of the hounds, the blast of the horns, and the shouts of the people proved too much for my thoroughbred horse, and, unable to resist the enthusiasm that seemed to be in the air, off he went with one bound. Never shall I forget that chase. John Gilpin's ride was nothing compared to it. I soon saw there was no chance of my controlling my animal, so, as we flew over fields, fences, and ditches, I simply clung to his neck, with tight-shut eyes. All would have gone well had the horse kept his feet, for we were going magnificently, but suddenly he stumbled, and down he came. It was a miracle that both of us were not killed, as the animal rolled and kicked.

I was picked up, unconscious; but after a while I recovered a bit, and was driven back to Mrs. Sands' home, where for at least a week I was confined to a darkened room. During the first two days one of my eyes was so swollen that it was impossible for me to tell whether its sight had been destroyed or not. The most remarkable feature of the accident, however, was that one half of my mustache had been clean shaved off, as though by a razor—probably by the horse's hoof, which proves, if I may be pardoned for the pun, what a close shave I had in the accident. Hence I was obliged to part with the other half of my mustache, which was a genuine sorrow to me in those days, as it was many a week before I looked like my old self.

During this summer Ward McAllister probably did more than any other one person to make the place gay. His picnics were called "Dutch treats," as each one simply paid his share of the costs of entertainment. A rendezvous was fixed some miles from Newport, and the guests arrived in all sorts of conveyances—some by boat, others on horseback, others driving or being driven in coaches. The scene invariably was one of much gayety, and as the evening progressed one could always see from afar the gleam of the fires over the clam-bakes, and hear the crackle of burning wood and the happy voices of the picnickers.

At one of these picnics Miss Work, after Mrs. Cooper Hewitt, danced on a large rug spread under the trees. She was one of the first ladies who had acquired the art of skirt dancing, and when long afterward I saw others who were celebrated throughout the world as professional dancers, I was able to appreciate that they never surpassed the grace of movement that this lady seemed to possess. The whole scene—the orchestra playing soft music under the trees, the firelight, and the dancer—made a sight never to be forgotten.

Looking back upon that summer, the pleasantest and the best hours that I remember were those passed with my sister. I usually rode up to her cottage, put my horse in the stables, and then she and I would wander out on the rocks,

to sit for hours watching the sea, while we talked. No one in the world ever had a heart more full of sympathy toward those who came to solicit her interest.

The time passed so quickly that what with the picnics, and the lunches, and the evening dances, before I knew it the summer had gone by, and autumn was at hand. The time had come for Mr. Sands and myself to take our horses and wander off to Lenox, the fashionable autumn resort in the Berkshire Hills.

There we led a more simple life than at Newport—like many other people, who left that gay resort for a little inn or small cottage in the quaint New England village.

We spent our days riding over the country, lunching in little inns we found in the course of our wanderings over the Berkshire Hills, and returning to Lenox in the evening to take supper. We generally made our principal meal in the middle of the day, though some of the fashionable element still copied city life, giving dinners at a later hour. In the evening we passed our time at different homes, playing old-fashioned games.

After passing a month at Lenox, Mr. Sands and myself rode to Hudson, on the banks of the river, and took our horses aboard the boat, arriving in New York the same evening, ready for another season of metropolitan society.

TO BE CONTINUED.



## THE WORLD

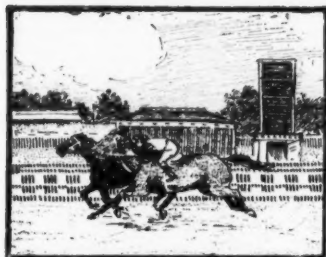
THE World's a wood in which all lose their way!"  
So wrote a poet in a bygone day.

Yet, what a source of pleasure to the wight  
Who'll blaze and hew his pathway to the light.

And undeterred by darkness and by pain,  
Keeps at it till he finds himself again!

JOHN KENDRICK BANGS.

# Señor Jeff Jackson's Thoroughbreds



By  
Thomas P. Barron.

**J**EFF JACKSON was a jockey, a west Texan, and a man who lost his nerve at Sheepshead, and won it back again—together with a girl and a few other things—down in Santa Fortuna, and I have his word for it that Santa Fortuna was the sportingest place and its citizens the sportingest lot of gents that ever stacked together to form a speculative community.

Now, there are places in South America where sporting blood is a stagnant fluid; where men of destiny shooting craps for a kingdom, or rather a republic, would wait for an earthquake to roll the bones for them; where the revolution and the pronunciamiento come in the nature of a chronological feature, merely to let the inhabitants know that the world has taken another little whirl on its axis.

But the republic of Capricornus, of which Santa Fortuna is the capital, is not of these. All bets are declared off when an earthquake rolls the dice, which is sufficiently often, and there are no revolutions save the purely elective affair designed to chase a president whose term has expired, but who still lingers on the job.

Gambling, not earthquakes or revolutions, is the staple commodity of Capricornus. It is likewise the chief industry, the main source of revenue, the dream and the business, the national passion, the *panem et circenses*. It is in the blood, the soil, the rivers, the

plains, the mountains, and the sky which is the fair and perpetual hue of a new, blue colossal poker chip. In Capricornus they worship neither the golden calf, tin gods, nor ex-presidents, but a radiant creature of rainbow texture whose name is Dame Fortune, sometimes call Miss Fortune by those whom she keeps at a distance.

There the outcast goddess sits secure among her lares and penates. These last are all there, from the national lottery, which takes the place of taxes, and is the first clause in the constitution, from the national lottery down—all the paraphernalia of venture except a Wall Street, but the main methods of keeping the currency in circulation are and always have been and always will be—cockfighting and horse racing.

Now, they have splendid fighting cocks in Santa Fortuna, and deeply I regret that it is not mine to sing a saga of those dauntless heroes who die steel-spurred like Western parties who were dilatory when expedition was the bet to play without a copper, and they raise splendid horses, especially of the breed of the Rio Pasto.

This is due to one Don Tiburcio de Tor, who lived a hundred years ago, or maybe it was only fifty, and who looked at the equine race in the spirit of a Burke or a De Brett. Don Tiburcio loved horses. He rode them, raised them, broke them, raced them, bet on them, and a thousand or so of them ran

half wild on his *estancia* by the Rio Pasto—small, hardy beasts of fierce spirit and tremendous lung power, for they were bred six thousand feet above the level of the sea. And Don Tiburcio studied horses.

He found that the American horse had a touch of the tar brush since he was the descendant of Moorish equines brought over by the conquistadores when they bore the blessings of Christianity to benighted Lo, and, with an eye to the future, Don Tiburcio took a jaunt over into Morocco, or Tripoli, or Arabia, or some such place, and brought back some magnificent Arab stallions, with which he bred his runty little nags into a race of heroes and aristocrats with flowing manes and tails, and high heads, and glossy skins, and dauntless hearts, and slim fast, fast limbs. They were famous, the Tor horses.

And now at last we come to Señor Jeff Jackson and the chronicle of his arrival in Santa Fortuna.

He came on the *San Telmo*, and he was the first person ashore, not so much because of the mad dash he made for the gangplank before it was fairly in place as because he was aided by a boot the size and general contour of a Texas stock saddle that equipped the ready foot of the second mate. Thus Jeff's entrance to the republic of Capricornus was dishonorable in the extreme. He had steamed several thousand seasick miles, rode three feet—on the mate's boot—described a short parabola, fell twenty more, swam fifteen more, and finally scrambled up the bare leg of a black man sitting on the wharf; in haste to boot, for there were sharks about, and thus ran the gamut of modern methods of travel.

Now, it is an axiom, oft proved by the mortality statistics, that one's foot may not take liberties with the coat tails of the bipedal faun of west Texas—no, not even though one may be a bucko mate—and I will state in explanation that Jeff Jackson, although only twenty-three years of age, was a broken man. He had lost his nerve.

It was this way. Jeff had been riding Hotspur, and he had been told to win.

They had him pocketed, and when they did not give him the right of way that was his, he had gathered up the reins, socked the spurs home, fanned Hotspur's flank, and went to it. And the earth that had been flying under him so smoothly flew up and smote him amain. It was one of the nastiest spills ever, and when Jeff came out of the hospital he found that the dizzy sight of the flying track, erstwhile so thrilling, gave him a nausea at the stomach and a tightening at the heart that sapped strength, and valor, and everything else that a jockey needs.

The next time they sewed him up, he did not go to it. There was something gone from him. His heart quailed at taking chances. The other jocks noticed it, and he began to lose races. The whisper went abroad that Jeff Jackson had lost his nerve, and men ceased to back his mounts. And it was not long before he got no mounts. Some men need a woman to keep them straight, some religion, some other things. Jeff was one of those who needed only his faith in the manhood of Jefferson Jackson, Esquire, and when that sheet anchor was gone he drifted, a broken hulk, tenantless of pride, ambition, or self-respect, and he sank low, for nowhere can one sink as fast or as far as at the race track.

One night after a debauch he awoke to find himself a foremast hand on the *San Telmo*. The mate had kicked him all the way down, and as a finishing touch, a *coup-de-pied d'adieu*, or something like, had kicked him overboard.

And Jeff Jackson, west Texan, did not resent, but wandered humbly away, while the second mate rebuked the uncharitable black man whose leg had officiated as Jeff's ladder to terra firma, for snatching the bread cast upon the waters from the unfortunate shark's mouth.

Jeff dallied about Santa Fortuna for a while, munching at what he afterward described as "hashed hell fire done up in a corn husk," and found the town to be a city of horses. In the narrow streets they kicked at him, and tried to bite him, and they crowded him into

doorways, and he turned out on a plaza where they were fighting cocks on the cathedral steps, consigning the whole equine race to servitude and abuse. Unconsciously he followed a crowd down the Avenida de Carrera until he came to an inclosure through which a stream of humanity poured.

"A bull fight," thought Jeff. "I will divert myself."

So he paid an American dollar for admission.

Jeff looked around him. There was a mob there, there was a brass band, there was a great grand stand filled with Paris hats, there was a *café-au-lait* president in a box, and there was a race track like a brown band about a green inclosure, and there was a bunch coming down the home stretch. Jeff crowded to the rail just as a scarlet rider came home three lengths ahead of the rest on a fine-limbed chestnut horse.

Jeff turned about, and looked up into the grand stand. Out of the blur of finery a face looked into his for a moment, and then Jeff Jackson walked up to the stand, and gave up the last dollar he had in the world to enter. He found a lucky vacant seat near her, and looked over her points as he would have those of a horse. She was a thoroughbred, all right.

Never had he seen a girl so slim, such slender hands and feet, never such black and crinkly hair, never such a delicate pallor of skin. She turned and caught his eye. Two sudden spots of scarlet flamed in her cheeks, she looked at him steadily for a moment, and then beckoned to him. Jeff approached with beating heart.

"Do you speak Spanish?" the girl asked prettily.

Jeff Jackson took a deep breath. For the first time he noticed that this dazzling girl wore a dress, that, although charming, was out of fashion and shabby, that her black mantilla was conspicuous among gorgeous bonnets, that the dark, thin, aristocratic gentleman at her side wore a black suit that was green at the seams, that his silk hat had lost its luster, that his snowy

cuffs were frayed. These things filled his mind so completely that he quite forgot that he himself was very disreputable. Said I not that he was a west Texan?

"Yes, I speak Spanish," he answered tremulously.

The girl turned to her companion. "*Padre mio*," she said, in silvery tones, "do you not remember when we stopped at New York when you brought me home from school from Paris? The great handicap at Brighton Beach? This gentleman was the rider of the winner. I have never forgotten his wonderful riding. It is Señor Jeff Jackson, is it not?"

"It is Señor Jeff Jackson," declared Señor Jeff Jackson proudly.

"I was sure of it."

"It is indeed he," said the old gentleman excitedly. "Ah, how you rode that day! And perhaps you are here to ride?"

"Not I," said Señor Jeff.

"If we could only get Señor Jackson to ride Cid Campeador, Mariana!" cried the old gentleman.

"Perhaps we can," said the girl softly. "Can you, Señor Jackson, ride a vicious, a very vicious horse?"

Señor Jackson's beardless cheeks rivalled those of the girl in color.

"I can ride any horse that lives," he declared fiercely.

"I was sure of that, also. Perhaps, *padre mio*, we can get Señor Jackson to ride the Cid a week from to-day."

"If he will consent," said the old gentleman, "I will talk with him later about the terms——"

Señor Jeff interrupted him.

"If you and the señorita wish," he said decisively, "I will ride the horse."

"Good!" said the girl gladly. "And if you win we will enter him for the Liberator Stakes. Look!" She pointed to the jockey in scarlet who had just won the race. "There is the one you will have to ride against. He rides the favorite—an English horse. He is the best and trickiest rider, and the greatest *amansador* in Capricornus."

The greatest "*amansador*" quite by chance looked up then, and stared for a



moment at them all. His eyes looked scorn at Jeff, and then burned with a subtle flame on the girl. When Jeff looked at her again the scarlet patches were gone from her cheeks.

"He once rode for our *estancia*—the Rio Pasto," said the old gentleman. "He broke Cid Campeador, and he is the only one who could ever ride him. I dismissed him for insolence. I, Señor Jackson, am Don Tiburcio de Tor, and this is my daughter Mariana."

Señor Jeff Jackson yielded his best west Texas bow, and thus it came to pass that he rode Cid Campeador to victory a week later for a purse of two thousand pesos. The *amansador* took second money.

Señor Jeff Jackson sat in the patio of the Casa de Tor with Mariana, and they were *alone*. That is a startling statement, but I mean it. Let a scion of the bluest blood in Santa Fortuna hang about the narrow Calle de Tor to get a glimpse of poppy-patched cheeks and eyes that had no visible depths, the man who was to win the Liberator Stakes on Cid Campeador might sit in the patio as much as he pleased.

For it never occurred to doubt Señor Jeff's social status.

"You speak such queer Spanish," said Mariana.

"I learned it in Texas," said Jeff.

"It is a degraded dialect—used only by common people. But you, Señor Jeff, are plainly of the *gente decente*."

Señor Jeff did not deny, for in sooth he felt himself the equal of royalty.

"I will teach you pure Castilian—to roll your r's and to lisp—if you win this race."

"The race is as good as won," said Señor Jeff calmly.

"You *must* win it. Just think, Señor Jeff. The Cid is the last of our horses of the pure strain. We have staked everything upon him—everything. If he loses we are beggars. Our family has been so poor of late years. If you win we shall save the Rio Pasto, pay off all the mortgages—we who once owned more land than any one in Capricornus. You *must*—*must* win. It will be dan-

gerous, too. There are more than twenty entries, and there are always accidents—spills—men and horses injured, sometimes killed. You see, it is run on the national holiday, the day of independence, and it is the greatest event of the year. Formerly it was *always* won by a horse of the Rio Pasto. But now the English thoroughbreds are faster."

"None of them are faster than the Cid," said Jeff. "We will win. I tell you, we will win."

"I am sure of it," said Mariana slowly. "The Cid is the best and bravest horse, and you are the best rider—and the bravest."

Again Señor Jeff Jackson did not deny.

No nameless terror clutched at his heart, no nausea sucked the strength from his limbs at the thought of the whirling track. And yet—the tricks of jockeys were the same the world over. The day before he had seen the *amansador* himself sewed up, and come home fourth in the race he should have won. But that mattered little. If they pocketed Jeff Jackson let them beware. He was a *man* again, and he was riding for the Tor family and for Mariana.

"The Cid and I can beat them *all*," said Señor Jeff softly.

The girl became pensive.

"You will have our eternal gratitude," she said, with an effort, "and half of the stakes—half of fifty thousand pesos—and then I suppose you will go away—back to your own country."

Señor Jeff turned and caught both her hands.

"Mariana," he said hoarsely, "*Mariana mia*—"

"Leave me go!" she cried, blushing, and then she suddenly burst into laughter, and never were the scarlet patches so brilliant as when she ran out the patio, eluding his grasp. And she gave a last glance that turned Señor Jeff to stone.

She—this slim, old-fashioned, beautiful little aristocrat, in this dark, old-fashioned corner of the world—loved him—Jeff Jackson, the jockey. It was

necessary for Jeff Jackson to be a caballero, and it was with a caballero's heart that he, too, left the patio. And he laughed as he thought of the race to come, for it was there he was to win the greatest prize that life had to offer.

The little Indian groom flashed his white teeth in a smile as Señor Jeff Jackson threw his arm about Cid Campeador's neck, and the Cid tossed his head impatiently, yet suffered the liberty. For the Cid loved Señor Jeff as Señor Jeff loved him. But as yet their confidence in each other was a shifting quantity; on the Cid's part on account of a dark distrust of the world of bipeds; on Jeff's part because the Cid was a creature of quivering nerves who became a demon of ugliness and stubbornness under the slightest abuse or carelessness that rasped his raw sensibilities. The *amansador*, whose trade was to break horses by violence and sheer force, had conquered him only by kindness, and infinite care, and patience.

The Cid had been entered in many races in his five years. Once he had balked, turned, knocked another horse down, jumped the fence, and buck-jumped all over the inclosure; once he had whirled about and circled the track at record speed in the wrong direction; once he had rolled on his rider and killed him, and he had done other things. But he had won two races, one under the *amansador*, one under Jeff, and in both he had spread-eagled his field at the start, and shown a wonderful speed. In the Liberator Stakes he was a long shot. They were betting three to one he would never start, and even money that he would put his jockey in the hospital. In all Santa Fortuna, where to be a judge of horse-flesh and of horsemen is better than to have a string of letters after your name, there were but two persons who believed in Cid Campeador and in Señor Jeff Jackson. Two? Nay, there were three. The third was the *amansador*.

In the judgment of the profession the stakes lay between Lady Diana, ridden by the *amansador*, and owned by a financier who owned half the banks of

the republic, Pepita Jimenez, and Ventuari. All three were English thoroughbreds.

Señor Jeff looked the Cid over caressingly, the lean barrel and extremely delicate limbs that betrayed the Rio Pasto strain, and the square, ugly, Jew-nosed head, with sullen, red-flecked eyes.

"You *alazan* devil!" he said, pulling the Cid's forelock. "You'll forget your nastiness once we get started. For you love to race, and once that sun-scorched looking-glass hide of yours gets streaming with excitement we'll show 'em our heels all the way around. For we're riding to-day for Mariana, and we'll lay that fifty thousand pesos at her slim little feet, or we'll die together in the home stretch."

"You think you will win?" drawled a voice.

Señor Jeff whirled to look into the face of the *amansador*.

"I don't think," he answered lightly. "I know we will win. So does the Cid."

"He is a great horse," said the *amansador*, "and a thoroughbred—but an African thoroughbred. He has what you call—a touch of the tar brush."

"Yes," said Jeff cheerfully. "He's a nigger horse, but a thoroughbred. Did you ever see a crazed nigger. He's the most desperate thing on earth. He will fight an army, and he'll tear you with his teeth in his last gasp. Well, that's the way the Cid will run to-day. He'll start all right, and he'll win."

"You are right," said the *amansador* slowly. "The talent think he will not start. But I know the horse, and I've seen you ride him. You can ride—and he is a better horse than Lady Diana. But you will not win. You—not the Cid, will lose the race. I will tell you why."

Señor Jeff laughed scornfully.

"You ride to save the Tor family," said the *amansador* venomously. "If you lose they will be beggars, homeless, in the street. Don Tiburcio will die of the shock, and what will become of the little Mariana?"

A long knife flashed in the *amansa-*

dor's hands as Jeff Jackson took a step toward him.

"*Aguarda un poco,*" he said coolly, "until I have finished. Look at your sweetheart's finger nails and hair, Señor Gringo. She has no moons in her nails, she has the 'evil' hair. She has a touch of the tar brush, too—little Mariana. They are aristocrats, yet her grandmother was a *mustafina*. There is the blood of black slaves there as well as that of conquistadores. It is common here. No one cares—much. But in your country that is different. Ah, that cuts you deep! You do not care to take me by the throat now. Now I will tell you why I will win. You will ride sick at heart, Señor Gringo, and when we come down the stretch together, you and I, neck and neck, I will turn and say to you in your own tongue: 'Your girl—she is a damned nigger!' And then you will fail, and I will win."

Over his enemy's shoulder Señor Jeff Jackson, shaking with rage, saw a white-faced girl.

The *amansador* saw the look, and turned, and then he fled swiftly.

Jeff's rage fell from him, and he walked forward and took Mariana's hands.

"*Ay Dios,*" he said, with a little laugh, as he looked at them. "Never a sign of a moon."

She gasped, and snatched them from him just as he would have kissed them, and when he looked up quickly to see the stricken look in her eyes he was the whiter of the two, and she was white to her crinkly hair. And then she was marching away, her head on high.

"Mariana," he begged her, "a moment! Let me explain!"

But Mariana never heard, for it seemed as if at that remark of Señor Jeff's she was suddenly stricken deaf, and dumb as well, and could see only her father, who was waiting for her beyond, where he would put his arm about her and console her.

To the arm of Jeff Jackson, who would have followed, trembling like an aspen, the little groom was clinging.

"Señor," he pleaded, "it is time for the race."

Señor Jeff Jackson put his shaking foot in the stirrup, and rode forth.

"God!" he muttered to himself bitterly. "What a start—what a start!"

It was a day of gold—as glorious as the deed it commemorated—a day when the blazing sun touched with a spark of his fire the heart of all things animate and inanimate. In the stands fans fluttered feverishly, in the ground below a sea of wide sombreros tossed, and fought, and sweated, and the twenty-two entries for the Liberator Stakes, from Lady Diana at the pole under the *amansador* in scarlet finery to Cid Campeador under Señor Jeff Jackson in the green and gold of the Rio Pasto, streamed rivulets from their shining hides as they jockeyed for the start.

But Señor Jeff knew it was not the heat, but pure excitement that dampened the sorrel skin of the Cid. And Jeff humored him. Burning with a hate against all men and things, and with a lust to kill, he sat the Cid quietly, giving never a pull on the reins or a touch of whip or spur to arouse the horse's fiendish temper.

They got off at the fifth attempt. They came down irregularly, and Jeff, glancing down the line, saw Lady Diana and Pepita Jimenez leap forward suddenly, and he gave the Cid the rein just as the cry of the starter barked hoarsely in his ears. The next instant a splintering crash sharpened by a scream sounded at his very heels as he cut across the track, followed by an excited roar from the crowd. The Liberator Stakes was maintaining its sanguinary reputation. There had been a nasty spill at the start in the rush for the pole.

At the first turn the Cid's nose was at the stirrup of the *amansador*, who led, and held the pole. Jeff held the horse with a light touch on the reins. Without volition he shot a quick glance at his enemy humped forward on his horse's neck, his dark, hard features set with determination, and as Jeff turned again a gray streak shot by like a ghost, and turned in directly before him, leading the *amansador* by half a length. Jeff marveled.

It was Sal-si-puedes, a long shot, that

had not been dreamed of as being in the running. And close behind on Jeff's right was the brown form of Pepita Jimenez, and to his left and behind was a chestnut phantom that Jeff did not dare to look at. But he knew it was Ventuari. They had him pocketed at the very start of the race.

Señor Jeff Jackson smiled grimly. They had him sewed up, but it could not last long at this terrific pace. The Cid ran free as water, and Jeff stared straight ahead at the track flowing down to meet and pass under them like a brown mill race. He thought of Mariana sitting up there in the grand stand, with that stricken look on her face, and the thought went through him with a bitterness—and then of a sudden the track seemed to leap up at him, and as he flinched the old compression clutched at his heart, the old nausea sucked the strength from his limbs, followed by another, more terrible dread. It was to hear those vile, promised words from the lips of the *amansador*.

When they came he knew he would fling himself and the Cid straight at the mocker, and they would all go down together, with Señor Jeff Jackson's fingers locked like a vise about the *amansador's* neck.

Then the track leaped up at him again with a sinister promise, and it left him clinging feebly to the reins. If it came again he knew he would fall. Señor Jeff, strung to breaking tension, had lost his nerve again.

They were on the back stretch, and he took a fearful glance backward. How far behind the others were! They must have been delayed by the spill, and the terrific pace increased the gap visibly. The race was among the five that fled away from the others like deer before heavy-running hounds.

Across the field Jeff could see the crowd and the packed stands like a swarm of part-colored insects from which came a ringing hum above the pounding of the hoofs. His brain teemed with images that reminded him of his dishonor. They ranged from the last good race on Hotspur to the scarlet patches on Mariana's cheeks, and clear

and distinct in the grand stand across the field he seemed to see her sitting in her shabby frock and mantilla among the gorgeous gowns and hats of the other women, with that same stricken look on her face.

He shook with the horror of it. Mariana had loved him, and he had failed her. And now she depended on him to win this race, and he failed her still.

They swept round the track, never altering their positions. Cid Campeador tugged at the reins, yet still Jeff held him in. Send him to it? It was all he could do to keep the horse from it.

Jeff gathered himself together, and clinched his teeth. He loosened the reins, and slowly, surely, the Cid's nose crept up past the *amansador's* stirrup. A little more and they would all be down together, for neither the *amansador* nor the rider of Sal-si-puedes yielded an inch. Again the track leaped up at Jeff with a furious lunge, and again he tugged feebly at the reins, until the Cid dropped back to his old position.

The grand stand and wire were straight ahead now, and he could hear the roar of the crowd going into a deafening din. Once again Jeff rallied his stricken nerves and tried, and once again he failed.

His mouth was dry, his hand weak, his whole being pervaded with a pungent bitterness. Sal-si-puedes began to falter. Inch by inch he dropped back. His rider lashed him, and he ran gamely, but still he lost. Were the race three hundred yards farther Jeff Jackson might win without danger of a spill.

But there was the wire looming up straight ahead, and the screaming crowd waiting.

Jeff pictured Mariana's loss—the *amansador's* triumph; and turned to receive the insult. It came.

"Your girl—she is a damned nigger!" snarled the *amansador* out of the corner of his mouth.

They was something snapped in Jeff Jackson then, and it left him cold. He saw the race as a spectator. Lady

Diana was running at top speed, Sal-si-puedes was failing, but there was stuff left in Cid Campeador yet.

Señor Jeff Jackson drove the spurs deep, and fanned the Cid's flank.

"Home, Cid, home!" he screamed, and the Cid's nose thrust up quickly into the too narrow gap.

For an instant Sal-si-puedes wavered, and then— The track flew and smote Señor Jeff Jackson with a thousand fists—as it had done before. There came no blessed unconsciousness this time, but instead an exquisite and ubiquitous agony. Yet he climbed to his feet like a cat.

There were the other four—all of them—a screaming, dust-veiled jumble of bright clothes and kicking limbs. A little to one side lay the *amansador* in a crumpled heap, that told Jeff that his enemy would never rise again. And there was Cid Campeador, his mane erect, his eye frantic, his muzzle white with foam and dust, scrambling to his feet. And from up the track came the thunder of coming hoofs.

One arm hung useless, yet Señor Jeff Jackson somehow flung himself into the saddle, and the Cid, with a wild plunge, reins a-flying, and his rider hanging helpless to his neck, galloped down the track.

The thunder of the pursuing hoofs was like the beating of trip hammer on Jeff's heart. There was the wire only fifty yards away, and the Cid ran toward it irregularly, and roughly, and slowly, like a lamed cart horse. Once he almost fell, yet he plunged on.

"Home, Cid!" whimpered Jeff, and then—they were under the wire *first*—and the others were flying past.

Again the earth, which had stopped flying, leaped up and smote Señor Jeff Jackson, and this time he gave his face to it willingly. And oblivion came.

He opened his eyes, and comprehension came to him. There was the face

of Mariana, and the stricken look was gone when he fumbled for her hands.

"Mariana," he whispered brokenly, "you did not understand. I knew he lied. It was a trick—"

And then the voice of the little Indian groom broke in, seeming to take the words from his very mouth:

"The *amansador*—he is dead—before he died—to tell you—it was a trick—he lied."

Jeff Jackson got up slowly, and the crowd parted pityingly to his bloody face and finery. Mariana was clinging to his hand. And then he saw the Cid Campeador. He lay in the middle of the track. His gaunt sides panted, and his throat rattled in agony, his delicate limbs quivered with pain. And one—the left foreleg—ended in a red, wet excrescence. A sob burst from Señor Jeff Jackson.

In the spill the beast had broken his leg at the fetlock, yet he had risen and galloped home to victory on the stump, with the hoof dangling on useless sinews and a shred of skin. A shot rang, and the stricken look was glazed from the Cid Campeador's eyes.

Nor was there a stricken look in those of Mariana when she clung to Señor Jeff Jackson and wept.

Señor Jeff Jackson rides in races no more, for out on the plains of the Rio Pasto he has found a better mission in life, which is to raise horses and children. He has two thousand of the one, and two of the other, and although they keep him fairly busy, he still has lots of time for the study of moons in finger nails. For in his wife's, which he examines with a view to osculation many times per day, sometimes there *are* moons, and sometimes there *are not*. Which is the way with most people's; but I hope that Jeff never finds it out. And I often wonder who started that moons-in-finger-nails story, anyway.



# LOUISETTE



By  
F. BERKELEY  
SMITH



COCK crew from far below in the village. The storm of the night before had thrashed itself out over the swift, yellow river, and, in the sparkling sunshine which ensued this rare September morning, the bell for mass quavered and clanged. As its last note wavered in the soft breeze up the sheer flank of the massive rock which dominated the cluster of red-tiled roofs at its base, Monsieur Pivot awakened.

He was a nervous, quick-eyed, swarthy little man, and he leaped from his bed briskly. He went over and peered out of the tiny window in the massive wall of the small, whitewashed room in which he slept. The tidy garden was gay with roses. Here he stood for some moments tugging at his trim imperial beard, his short, wiry body bent as he glanced with a smile at the warm sunshine without.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, rubbing his hands, glad of the change. It had poured in torrents for a week. He left the window, thrust his bare feet into a pair of embroidered carpet slippers, fumbled in a cupboard for a match, scratched it under the rim of a worm-eaten table of solid oak, and slipped its flaming end into a little stove choked with shavings.

The gentle breeze drove the smoke in blue rifts down into the snug little garden while Monsieur Pivot washed and shaved. His toilet over, he put on a

pair of neatly blackened boots, drew on a pair of dark-green trousers with a red military stripe, buttoned up ten brass buttons of a jacket to match the trousers, the last button securing a standing collar beneath his imperial, and carefully waxed his mustache to needle points by the aid of a mirror framed in glued sea shells.

"Ah!" he reiterated briskly as he reached above the mirror, unhooked a huge iron key half as long as his forearm, and strode out into the garden by way of a whitewashed antechamber.

In the garden he bent to smell a rose, then turned back into the antechamber and called to a half-closed door:

"Louisette!"

"Yes, father."

"You may prepare the coffee, my little rabbit."

He turned back into the garden and glanced up genially at the blue sky. Then he went his way down a narrow path hedged with daisies. He had a happy nature, had Monsieur Pivot.

No one who has ever stood in that garden but has been impressed by the gruesomeness of its surroundings, even upon a sunlit September morning. For it lies snug and smiling back of two sinister towers belonging to one of the most powerful dungeons in France, whose history, dating from the ninth century, is replete with confinement,



torture, and death. Built as a stronghold for horror and human suffering, it had served its purpose stubbornly until the very end of Feudalism. The one bright spot in this mountain of misery, its garden, reminds one of a bouquet that has fallen to the bottom of a pit. At the end of the garden is a cavernous, rectangular well, its sheer walls ascending from the gloom below until they mount to the level of the towers. Its seven floors have long since rotted and fallen through. A flight of stone steps, green with slime, lead down to its ghostly bottom, where a low door gives entrance to another cavernous, roofless rectangle, twice as large as its mate. Its grim walls are pierced here and there by the outlets of secret passages, indicating the level of its bygone floors and the evil of its bygone tyrants.

High above, circling against the blue sky, crows croak dismally. In the crevasses and crannies of the oozing walls, squeaking bats and rats and owls have found a lodging for centuries.

Even at noon the place makes one shiver. In winter it takes a stout heart to stand within the carcasses of these hideous chambers alone. At night it becomes terrible. Down, down, down, deep beneath the ground, turning, twisting in a labyrinth of passages and dire holes, lost from sound and the light of day, lies a hell.

Monsieur Pivot did not descend into either of these cavernous chambers. He skirted them halfway up their ghostly depths by a soggy path, which ended at a low, massive doorway. Once within, he gripped in the dark an iron handrail, which wound itself in a cold sweat up a narrow stone stairway. At the second landing a glimmer of light disclosed a door of solid oak, heavily barred and bolted. It was at this door that Monsieur Pivot stopped, slid back a shutter, peered in, glanced at his watch, shot back the bolts, and, inserting the big key in a creaky lock, turned it twice over. The door swung back on its hinges with a hollow groan, as if it echoed some of the misery it had concealed in the past.

"Good morning, my friends," cried

Monsieur Pivot, his cheery voice ringing in the stone room beyond.

In the half light from a high-barred window, a form on an iron cot rolled out of a blanket with a yawn.

It was the village drunkard, Barbouche. He sat up with a grin, rubbed his shock of gray hair, and squinted a sleepy eye at his jailer.

"Sacred name of a dog," said he pleasantly, "but thou hast an early service at thine hotel, my good Pivot! Javarde! Wake up—it's the patron."

Javarde, the carter, a fat, pin-eyed little man, round as a keg, with a red face and a steel hook for a right hand, slid out of his blanket in his sock feet. He absently shook Pivot's proffered hand, and sat gazing, bewildered, at the floor, still groggy from the day before, when he had been found snoring on the roadside in the rain beside a cask of Medoc he had tapped in transit to its destination, the village inn of the "Cerf Noir."

"Eh, neighbor!" shouted Barbouche to a form in the corner. A lean, red-haired fellow, whose gaunt hands could snare a rabbit or net a partridge in the dark as easily as he could drink, slipped out of his blanket with the quickness of a weasel.

It was René Jean, the poacher, better known in the district as "Pussy-paw."

Monsieur Pivot eyed his three prisoners with a smile tempered with the importance of his position. Both Barbouche and Javarde were old friends of his. Inwardly he was glad when they arrived. They cheered up the long evenings when Louissette was asleep. There was no better hand at piquet than Barbouche when he was sober. As for Pussy-paw, he had him but seldom. Pussy-paw, like the black fox reported in the neighborhood, was rarely seen.

"Ah!" exclaimed Pivot. "It is a glorious day. Have you slept well?"

"As sound as three cats," grinned Pussy-paw, slipping his feet into his sabots.

There came a gentle rap at the door. Pivot laid a finger on his nose and winked.

"*Café au lait*," he whispered, and turned to the door.

"The *Merè* Truchard was late with the milk," explained Louissette from the landing as she passed to her father three steaming bowls and half a loaf of bread.

"*Sacristi!*" exclaimed Barbouche. "But thou art a good one. One is well under thy roof, friend Pivot," he declared, shaking his grizzled head as he sopped his bread in his coffee.

"The jailer at Les Fourches is a monsieur with no manners."

"He's a rough old number," put in Javarde. "Barbouche is right. We stopped there in April."

"Thrice the son of a pig," added Pussy-paw, with more knowledge than they.

"What would you have?" said Monsieur Pivot, sensibly touched by the compliments. "They can never say of Pivot that he has no heart. In duty—Ah, in that I am as punctilious as a general, for I am a soldier. Besides, one stomach is like another, it needs to be filled." A unanimous murmur of approval escaped the three.

"It's not because some of us once in a while like our fling that we should be treated like swine," grumbled Barbouche. "What does the motto say? *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*. There you are! Mademoiselle Louissette is well?" he added, lowering his hoarse voice reverently.

"Oh! *La! la!*" laughed Pivot. "As if she ever were ill, that little one."

Pussy-paw swilled down his *café au lait* at a gulp. It had become a habit with him to swallow quickly. Javarde sipped his slowly, mumbling over its excellence until he scrubbed the bowl clean with his last morsel of bread.

"Ah!" ejaculated Pivot, rubbing his hands as the three bowls were carefully laid aside on the stone floor. "It is my duty to announce to you that you are now free, my friends."

There ensued a triple grunt of satisfaction.

"But," continued Pivot, "it is Saturday, and the château is open to visitors. I expect a heavy day to-day. As a rule, they come here first. There are already

two automobiles of the rich Americans at the *Cerf Noir*. If it would not"—here Monsieur Pivot paused, elevated his eyebrows, and confided gently—"if it would not inconvenience you, gentlemen, would you mind waiting until noon? I have a slight favor to ask. You can easily hear my foot on the stairs. *Eh bien!* When you do, rattle the chains in the corner—and groan a little. You understand, my friends, my position. One must preserve one's reputation—one's career as a jailer. For what is a jail without prisoners? Bah! The thing is idiotic."

"*Parbleu!*" echoed Barbouche, with conviction.

"*Bien sûr,*" agreed Javarde and Pussy-paw.

"There are always two halves to a five-franc piece," added Pivot.

Barbouche opened his eyes wide.

"*Mon Dieu*, you are astonished, my good Barbouche!" exclaimed Pivot. "They give gold if they are well pleased, these Messieurs Américains. I show them *all*. Be polite to the ladies—that is what I say. As for the gentlemen, interest them. *Tenez!* I have the *boudoir* cell of *Mélice d'Anjou*—she who befriended the Red Knight of Tarragon. I reserve that until the last, you understand, with a special little explanation to monsieur when the ladies are in the garden."

Again Pivot rubbed his hands briskly, and, stepping over to a huge chain linked to the wall, raised it, and let it fall with a rattling crash.

"Take your choice," said he. "There are two others over there in the corner between the trapdoors, and when I open the shutter and light the candle that madame can see—Ah, it is well. I see you understand." He turned to go.

"Louissette has the *Petit Parisien* of yesterday," he added as his hand touched the door. "When she has finished reading it, I'll bring it to you." He paused for a moment as if lost in thought. "Ah!" he exclaimed. "I had almost forgotten. You know the pump, Barbouche? It pumps hard. It needs a new washer. If you are passing Duquesne's this afternoon get me another.

I shall be too busy to go down to the village." He tossed Barbouche a ten-sou piece and closed the heavy door with a clang. Halfway down the stairs he stopped, tripped back to the landing, and turned the key in the lock. It was more prudent, seeing that the inspector of the gendarmerie was then in the village visiting his sweetheart.

I have said that the one bright spot in this grim place was the garden. That is erroneous. The one bright spot in it was Louissette.

She had known these stern, forbidding walls all her life, having been born in the whitewashed room with the oaken table, the same room in which Madame Pivot died at her birth.

When Louissette was able to toddle, she would spend hours before the great entrance gate playing with wild flowers, mud, and her doll, whose flaxen hair was as fair as her own—hours when she grew to know the village below its roofs, for she was seldom taken down there, and only now and then the village children strayed up the grass-grown path that led to the prison to cast a shy, distrustful glance at her. For she was the daughter of the jailer.

Louissette, like the pink rose in the garden, had grown to beauty, sheltered by the grim towers. A flower imprisoned in a mountain.

Even when little she knew by heart the ghostly chambers, and named them in turn after her own fashion.

The one with the slimy stairs she called "the church." The greater chamber she named "the palace," where the fairies lived. The owls were good fairies; the rats their servants. The bats brought bad news; the crows were their guards.

When Louissette was old enough to go to school in the village, she was taken down by the Mère Truchard in the morning after she had milked her cows, and brought back at sunset by the cows and the Mère Truchard when she had finished her third milking in the green pasture skirting the river.

At school, she was shy, gentle, and

timid, and was regarded by the other children as a curiosity—apart. They did not say, "Here comes Louissette;" they said, "There she is." For how could she be one of them, being the little girl of the jailer? One does not romp with the daughter of the hangman.

At eighteen, Louissette was a slender, graceful girl, with soft brown eyes that looked straight into yours. She adored her father, and she held in her impressionable young heart a certain loyal love for her grim surroundings, just as one looks back with pride upon the ruins of one's family château.

This did not deter her, however, from thinking about Paris, which she had never seen, or from dreaming over the half dozen odd novels of her father's which she knew by heart. Monsieur Pivot knew nothing of their romantic contents. They had belonged to Madame Pivot.

"Those," he had the habit of saying, with a shrug at the shelf, "are for idlers; soldiers have no time to read. As for books, it takes a harder head than mine to know all the history of France. But what I know I know. Ah, that—" And he would turn abruptly on his heel and pace away, as if to take himself out of earshot of the compliment of his listener.

If there was one thing Monsieur Pivot prided himself on, it was the history of the prison. It was his custom now and then to go down to the village for a vermouth at the Cerf Noir. It was while he sat in the café of this ancient inn, the day before, that he had perceived the two automobiles in the garage. He hurried over his vermouth and returned to the prison in haste. One never could tell with foreigners—had he not once had a party at midnight? However, the strangers did not appear, and he learned from the Mère Truchard that evening that they had gone to see the statue of Jeanne d'Arc, the church, and thence to dinner.

Barely had Monsieur Pivot time to retrace his steps, turn the key in the lock, and regain the garden, when the

bell over the entrance gate jingled. Louise ran to open it.

There entered a stout, businesslike gentleman, followed by a thin, gray-haired lady carrying a Baedeker and two postal cards. Aimlessly behind her wandered an angular girl, wearing gold-rimmed spectacles, a brown tailor-made suit, and a desiccated smile.

"Well, Em, I guess this is *it*, all right," declared the businesslike one to the lady.

The spectacled girl was boring into a letter from home. "It's from Maude," said she. "Mommer! Edith Wilson's engaged! Well, did you *ever*!"

"Got your kodak, Babe?" inquired the businesslike one sharply.

"Yes, she's got it, Sam," intervened the mother, in an appeasing tone.

A tactful nudge from the mother now distracted the daughter's attention for a second to the grim towers.

"I think it just too fascinating for words," she declared mechanically, and again reverted to the crisscrossed page.

"Wonder how long we've got here, Em?" grunted the businesslike one irritably. "It's a good sixty-seven kilometers to Bazan, so the chauffeur says. That's where we lunch, ain't it?"

Monsieur Pivot was now beside them.

"Ask him how long we've got here, Babe," reiterated the father.

Monsieur Pivot bowed during the daughter's unintelligible attempt. Again the bell jingled. This time Louise opened the gate to a gentleman alone.

"Good morning, mademoiselle," said the stranger in excellent French, lifting an English tweed shooting hat as he entered.

"You wish to see the prison, monsieur?" ventured Louise.

"If it will not disturb you, mademoiselle," said he.

For a brief moment the stranger gazed at her, meeting her brown eyes with a kindly smile.

"I will go and tell my father," said Louise, blushing. She closed the gate.

The stranger had an air about him of being perfectly at his ease. He was perhaps thirty years of age, tall, well

built, and dressed in a smart, comfortable suit of gray homespun. His handsome, clean-cut features, bronzed by the sun, the straight nose, and the firm, clean-shaven, energetic mouth, would have given to his profile the severity of a finely chiseled mask, were it not for his merry gray eyes and his superb teeth. There was about his whole personality the refined intelligence of a man of the world.

His eyes followed Louise until she returned. Then he said pleasantly: "Would you be amiable enough, mademoiselle, to tell my chauffeur he need not wait?"

"Certainly, monsieur."

Again the stranger stood gazing after her, until Louise's fair little head disappeared in the whitewashed room. Monsieur Pivot awakened him from his reverie with his usual effusive politeness. The stranger turned.

"You wish to see the prison, monsieur?" said Pivot.

"Yes," said the stranger, "all of it," his eyes again reverting to the vacant window beyond the roses.

"It is well, monsieur," returned Pivot, with enthusiasm. "We shall then be five." He nodded to the waiting group.

"Monsieur is with them, I presume?"

"I am alone," said the stranger.

"A thousand pardons, monsieur," apologized Pivot. "A moment, I pray you—my lantern. Ah, I see my daughter has already foreseen the necessity. This way, if you please." He took the lantern from Louise, and the four visitors followed him down the garden path in silence.

Monsieur Pivot was beaming with importance as he led them, with infinite care, down the slimy steps.

Having assembled them upon the ghostly floor, he broke forth into history.

"Ah!" he began. His voice and gestures suddenly changed to those of a heavy tragedian, as he pointed to the outlet of a secret passage. "It was there that the Black Duke decided upon his victims. Hidden up behind that tiny

slit," he recited tremulously, "the Black Duke, as the unfortunate ones passed him, muttered to his guards those he wished imprisoned, those whom he wished tortured, and those"—Pivot's voice sank solemnly—"whom he wished to die. Whence came such a tyrant? History stands aghast and shuddering at the evil deeds of this man——"

"What's he say, Em?" inquired the businesslike one.

"He says it was up there the Black Duke died."

"Come, you shall see," continued Pivot. "Be careful, mademoiselle, the stairs are slippery." He led the way below ground, the light of his lantern wavering in the darkness as they descended to the first tier of dungeons.

"It was here," he explained, leading them into a cell, "that four holy fathers were imprisoned for ten years. For ten years, messieurs, they did not see the light of day, save from what you can see dimly through this small hole in the roof, through which their food was passed. For ten years, messieurs—and yet they lived! Are we not awed by such fortitude? And it was here in this mouth of darkness"—Monsieur Pivot recoiled at the low entrance to a vault—"it was through this door they pushed the condemned ones." He suited the action to the words. Gripping an imaginary victim in the dark, he rushed him by the shoulders into the vault. "Ha!" he cried. "Thus was it done, quickly, with no pity. And there beyond, in the corner, is the black hole. It was called the *Oubliette*. It leads to the river—*l'ouïl!*" He shrugged his shoulders with awed resignation. "That into which one falls and is forgotten."

On he led them down, down among the labyrinth of cells, stairs, and passages.

"It was here"—he stopped again to explain—"that the tyrant came to gloat over his enemies. From this secret passage he came with his friends to mock those groaning in agony. It is here from this gallery he looked down on his bishop hanging in chains. He would call out to him:

"Ha! ha! my old one, how goes it?

You were better off in the castle. Eh, blockhead—food for swine! Vile dog—devil's tongue! Drink gravel, if thou art thirsty, and pat thy hollow paunch!" Even ladies were tortured here. Ah, *mais oui!* Mélice of Anjou and St. Catherine the Gentle—trussed up like a turkey, messieurs—they burned her alive at the top of the great tower. Permit me, mesdames."

He offered his hand to the mother and the spectacled girl at a sharp turn in the stairs, that now led them to the landing before the locked and bolted door. A clanking crash of chains reverberated through the corridor.

The spectacled girl emitted a dry, squeaky little scream.

"Do not be alarmed, mademoiselle," said Pivot. "There is no danger. Besides, I am with you."

"Mercy sakes alive!" gasped the mother. "You don't mean to say there are prisoners here now?"

"Unhappily, madame," sighed Pivot, who had caught the drift of her meaning by her gesture. He lowered his voice to a whisper. "It is against the rules," he confided, "but I see you are interested. If mademoiselle, monsieur, and madame would like to see, I will make an exception—but not a word in the village!"

A frenzied growl and a sharp cry of pain again awakened the silent corridor. Then again the swishing, clanking chains. The businesslike one snapped out his watch in the half light and grunted. The mother nodded in timid assent. The spectacled girl said breathlessly, "Oh, if we *could!*" While the stranger, still bringing up the rear, a position which he had throughout Monsieur Pivot's lecture quietly maintained, said nothing. In turn, the daughter, mother, and father peered on tiptoe into the gloom beyond the grated shutter. The stranger held back, while he overheard Pivot explaining as he led on down the stairs:

"It is one's duty, madame, to imprison such vermin as they. They are Leroux, Tête Rouge, and Varino, the famous bandits. Madame evidently has heard. They have terrorized our re-

gion for years by murder, madame, by pillage."

"And you are not afraid?" exclaimed the mother, as the daughter successfully explained.

Monsieur Pivot again shrugged his shoulders.

"*Mon Dieu!*" he sighed. "One must do one's duty. I am a soldier as well as a jailer, madame. One must have the courage. One must not possess the heart of the chicken."

Through a barred window of the landing the stranger perceived that the ladies had gained the garden. Again he listened intently, and overheard Pivot say to the businesslike one in *sotto voce*:

"And now that the ladies have gone—ahem!—the boudoir of *Mélice D'Anjou*."

The stranger stepped back to the bolted door, slid the shutter, and peered in intently. Then his eye brightened in a smile.

"*Bonjour*, Pussy-paw!" said he. "I forgive you for my partridges."

There was a murmur of voices within. Pussy-paw slipped across the room with the swiftness of a cat. For an instant his small, keen eyes peered through the grating.

"Monsieur Treviss!" he exclaimed, with a quick intake of his breath, followed by that half-defiant look of gratitude that an animal gives to one opening his trap. Then he said steadily: "I swear by St. Hubert, monsieur, it is the last feather I take from your lands."

A fortnight passed. During these two weeks, Mr. Barton Treviss remained at the *Cerf Noir*. He knew that by the end of another fortnight his freedom would be at an end. It was so with him yearly. Two months and a half of freedom in that quaint little chateau of his, tucked away in a green forest some fifty kilometers down the river where, with the exception of now and then an old friend as guest, he buried himself to the outside world and was happy with his dogs and his guns. Then back to London "to the

same old grind," as he was wont to express it. Now that he was proprietor of his own theater, the grind was even more strenuous. There was the new piece to rehearse and try out upon the critical public, who, in return for having amassed for this excellent romantic actor an independent fortune, exacted in return a "hit of the season."

It was in quest of certain architectural details for the dungeon scene in the second act of the new piece that Barton Treviss had wandered up the river. To his housekeeper at the chateau he had written saying to forward no more mail, as he was still en route, with no fixed address. To his gamekeeper he wrote instructing him to notify the justice of the peace that he had waved his *procès verbal* against one Pussy-paw, poacher. To his assistant manager in London he wrote, telling him to postpone the date set for rehearsals. Having posted these three letters the morning after he had forgiven Pussy-paw he flung himself into an easy-chair in his clean, old-fashioned bedroom at the inn. He became unconscious that the bell had rung vociferously in the courtyard for luncheon. He sat there with his eyes half closed; the image of a fair little head, a pair of frank brown eyes, and the sound of a gentle voice had taken possession of him.

For the first time in his memory, Mr. Barton Treviss, romantic actor, was in love.

Past master in the portrayal of manufactured romance, he sat there mute before the mighty simplicity of truth, *Louissette* filling his heart and mind.

He went to the window, lighted a cigarette, and stood like one in a trance, looking out at the grim towers of the prison rising above the trees of the sleepy village. He tossed his cigarette in the grate, put on his hat, and retraced his way to the prison, where he disclosed to Monsieur Pivot the object of his visit—his search for the details of the second act. Monsieur Pivot's generous interest was intense.

It was thus that Barton Treviss became a daily visitor, and *Louissette* came



to sit beside him while he drew, blocking in the great towers, detailing the grim little doors with their massive hinges and bolts.

They spent their afternoons together now, upon the top of the great rock where Louissette had played when a child, her brown eyes gazing wistfully at the red roofs of the dull little village below. He told her of the world she craved to know, in a tenderly fatherly way, for Barton Treviss knew the world so well that he told her nothing of its evil, only of its light and happiness.

He told her, too, this last afternoon before his departure as they sat there in the wind-blown grass beneath the towers, of his own life, of his loneliness.

Impulsively, at the word "loneliness," her small hand sought his.

"I, too, am lonely," said she. "I have been lonely all my life. In winter it is worse——"

"I know," he mused, like a man in a dream. "We are all prisoners."

They ceased speaking.

A crow went winging over them, croaking ominously.

Barton Treviss turned slowly toward Louissette.

"To-morrow," said he, "I shall again be a prisoner—and you, dear child!"

He glanced up at the forbidding towers breasting the twilight.

Two tears welled up into the brown eyes. Treviss caught her in his arms.

"Louissette," he murmured against the tear-stained face. "You believe me? Look at me. You believe me, dear? That I love you? That I love you——"

She gave him her lips. "I, too, love you," she breathed. "I have loved you ever—ever since that first morning."

Three days before the first rehearsal of the new piece, the assistant manager leaped out of his chair with a bound, gripping a half-crumpled telegram. He crossed the room of his London club and thrust the slip beneath the nose of a fat and seasoned old comedian, half napping in the corner.

"Zounds, Harry!" he cried. "Read that! The devil! His career's ruined!"

The fat and seasoned old comedian quietly adjusted his eyeglasses to the humorous crinkle in his nose, and read.

"God bless my heart!" he chuckled, smiling as he looked up. "Good old Barton! So he's found her at last, has he?"

"Found her! I should say he *had* found her. They're married, I tell you! Barton's done for. A leading romantic actor with a wife! I tell you, Harry, the public won't stand for it. His popularity—his happiness—— Bah! It's impossible!"

The fat and seasoned old comedian slowly recovered his glasses and cited many happy instances to the contrary.



## A GRAY DAY

THROUGH the mists I see thee, love,  
Silver mists;  
Longing overshadows love,  
When it lists.  
Lie thou still upon my breast,  
Let love give eternal rest,  
Through the mists be soft caressed,  
Silver mists!

VIRGINIA KLINE.

# BILL HEENAN GETS SQUARE



BY WILLIAM SLAVENS McNUTT

**B**IG BILL HEENAN sat alone by a small table in the rear of a saloon in Fairbanks, idly making coon-can spreads against a dead hand that he had dealt out. In the front of the place a crowd was gathered about a young man—one Wilbur—who leaned against the bar, telling much news, and boasting loudly of the hardships he had undergone, for he had just made the trip in over the trail from Valdez.

Bill was not interested. He had watched them come and go in the North for so many years, and had come and gone himself over so many of the trails of "The Great Country," and knew its life and people so thoroughly that gossip of it was to him a bore. Bill knew this man who stood by the bar, importantly retailing the news of the country off to the southwest whence he had come—knew him for a man who had been in the country for but a bare five years—and he was filled with a great contempt for the crowd who stood listening to the words of this mere fledgling.

"Dog-gone chechahco!" he sneered to himself. "Hear him spill talk you'd think he was wolf-born out o' this land, an' weaned on icicles! Yeh! You'd think he'd struck the mother lode o' the world over on the Mackenzie somewhere, an' just got back to tell about it with 'leven million in dust with him!"

A man strayed back from the edge

of the crowd, and sat down beside Heenan, laughing at the disgusted frown on the big fellow's weather-beaten face.

"What little thing's not right with you, Billiam?" he inquired. "You look like a bad Malemute with a bum ear. What's eatin' you?"

"Aw, them mutts!" Heenan answered, waving his hand toward the crowd in front. "This man's land's got foolish since Dawson. All them preachers an' lawyers an' clerks an'—an' all that kind o' scum come bustin' into the country, an' they never got money enough to bust out ag'in. No, an' they never get far enough away from a good fire in cold weather to freeze up an' die, like they'd ought to. They gimme a pain! A guy sticks his head out the door in cold weather to look at the thermometer, an' they all come runnin' an' ask him what kind of a trip did he have, an' how did he ever get through! That pimple-headed, turtle-footed, five-foot-ten o' tender meat ye see standin' up by the bar there—he's just mushed all the way up from Valdez! All the way! It ain't five hundred mile, an' road houses now ever' little piece—regular hotels.

"I guess he did have some of a trip, at that, Bill. She's been pretty cold this past week."

"Shut up a minute!" Heenan interrupted him. "Listen."

The voice of the one who was telling the news came back to them:

"An' old man Larney he says to her

he says: 'You'll marry Jeff Harden on Christmas night, like I fixed up for ye to,' he says, 'or I'll lambaste you till your hide's as ornery black as your temper!' he says to her. Yeh. An' she's dead stuck on this young guy, ye know, an'——"

Heenan got up.

"I'm goin' up with the rest o' these boobys," he said, "an' leave this young squirt to tell me all about a friend o' mine that I come into this country with twenty-five year gone, when this party was workin' his lips on the nipple of a milk bottle."

He walked up to the front, and elbowed his way through the crowd to the wordy center of attraction. Wilbur greeted him with extravagant cordiality:

"Why, hello, Bill Heenan! Gee, but I'm glad to see you! Have a drink?"

Bill regarded him coldly.

"Did I hear ye makin' some talk about Larney?" he inquired. "Old Dan Larney, that runs that outfittin' store an' road house up on the Tanana, in back o' the Goodpaster River?"

"Yes—sure! You know Dan, do you?"

"Me? Oh, just a mite! Him an' me come North together 'bout twenty-five years back. I held off a half a hundred o' Hydas down on the Prince o' Wales with an old Springfield while he made his get-away with one o' their squaws. I know him just a mite! But I ain't seen him for goin' on four year—what's this story ye were tellin' 'bout him?"

"Why, this girl o' his—— Is she out o' that squaw you're tellin' me he swiped off the Hydas, I wonder?"

"Yeh. She's got yellow hair? Uhu! She's quarter blood; her mother's father was a Rooshian trader from Sitka. What about it?"

"Why, you see, this girl o' his—this Nellie—old Dan he sends her outside to school about seven years ago, see? An' last spring she's eighteen, an' Dan he has her come back up here again with him."

"Yeh."

"Well, it seems she got quite notiony while she was at school down 'below,'

an' when she come back she's holdin' her head pretty high for Siwash, I hear."

"Uh-hu!"

"Old Dan and his ways don't suit her for a little bit after she gets back. Him an' her travel along pretty well on the outs for quite a spell, each of 'em gettin' hotter under the collar all the time, an' while I was down there old Dan he broke loose, an' told her right up an' down what was what."

"Is that right?"

"Yep. You know, they been figurin' some on a railroad in from Valdez, and there was a young engineer by the name of Phelan in there——"

"Jimmie Phelan? Tall, black-haired young guy? I know him; he done some gov'ment survey up in the Kuskokwim a couple o' years ago."

"That's him. That's the guy. Well, Phelan's in an' out o' Dan's place on the Tanana there quite a lot—see? An' this girl o' Dan's—this Nellie—she goes plumb nutty over Phelan—batty! Oh, she was clean crazy about him. An' Phelan he was dippy over her, too. Wanted to go the limit an' marry her, they tell me. You can't blame him a lot, at that. Say, she certainly is one peach! Pretty? Oh, my! Yellow hair an' blue eyes an' the prettiest——"

"What about Phelan an' the rest of it?"

"Oh, yes. Well, old Dan he don't cotton to Phelan a little bit. You know old Dan—a rough, tough old crab; an' Phelan—he's a well-spoken kid, you know, kind of dudish like almost—an' Dan don't like him a little bit. Then this Jeff Harden comes along. I don't know him, but he's a tough-lookin' customer, all right. They say he's made his pile down in British Columbia. Anyhow, this Jeff was comin' in here to Fairbanks to look over a property, an' he switches off the trail there where she crosses the Tanana, an' hikes across to see Dan. I reckon him an' Dan is old pals, from what I hear. Anyhow, he hikes up to Dan's place, an' gets his lamps on this Nellie, an'—that's all. He's got the marryin' bug right off, quick, see? An' old Dan he falls for

that hard. Sure. That just suits him. An' when he springs it on the girl that's when they have this row I'm tellin' you about. Old Dan he laid down the law right. 'You'll marry Jeff Harden on Christmas night, like I fixed up for you to,' he says, 'or I'll lambaste you till your hide's as onery black as your temper!' That's just what he said to her; an' she bawled an' hullabalooed around a lot, but there was nothin' doin' with old Dan. She gets a hubby Christmas night, an' that hubby's goin' to be Jeff Harden, you bet."

"Christmas night, huh? That's the twenty-fifth, ain't it? An' this is the twenty-second. Yeh. What kind of a lookin' party is this Jeff Harden person ye talk of?"

"Why—er—tough-lookin' customer he is; great big heavy-set guy, with a—"

"Black hair?"

"No, gray."

Heenan squinted thoughtfully.

"U-m-m! Yes, it would be now," he mused.

He looked Wilbur all over very deliberately.

"How do you come to know so much about old Dan Larney's business?" he snapped suddenly.

Wilbur started.

"Why—er—why, me an' Dan's old friends, Bill. I've known him ever since I first come North. I—"

"They tell me ye had a right tough trip comin' in; is that right?"

"Oh, no. No-o-o, it wasn't bad. Might have been pretty tough for some, but I didn't have much trouble."

"Ye didn't, hey? That's good! You'll have a better appetite for the trouble you're goin' to have in just about one minute."

Wilbur started.

"Why—why, what—what do you mean, Bill? What—"

"Ye wall-eyed, mule-eared, scandal-peddlin' chechahco bum, you! I'll teach ye to eat a white man's grub, an' then go tell his business all around the first camp ye come to! I'll—"

"Now, look here, Bill—I didn't mean to—"

"Ye didn't mean to make no war talk to me! You bet your sweet life ye didn't! But ye did! I'm goin' to learn you some manners, you busted straight, you! You four-card flush! You big talkin' fireside musher! Put up your hands, an' show me what ye got besides a runaway tongue! Come to it, you, 'cause I ain't got a lot o' time. Come on!"

"I don't want to fight you, Bill. I — Ow! Look out! Hey, you! O-oh! Don't!"

Bill had picked him up by the back of the neck and the seat of his trousers, and was shaking him up and down as a man shakes an ash sifter. "Show something," he exhorted as he shook him. "Come on, you loud-talkin' pinhead! Ye told us all about what a whale of a man y'are; show us how you'd lick Bill Heenan if he ever went an' got fresh with ye! Come on! Show something!"

He snapped the man down on his feet with a jar that brought a pained grunt from him. Then he slapped his cheeks, boxed his ears, and tweaked his nose.

Heenan stepped back, and stood with his hands on his hips, regarding the man disgustedly. "Ain't ye goin' to try to fight at all?" he inquired. "After all ye been tellin' this crowd about what for of a man ye was?"

Wilbur shrugged sulkily.

"I didn't say anything about being a fighter, Heenan. All I said was—"

"That ye was a musher? Fine! It's two hundred an' fifty mile from here into Dan Larney's place; I'm goin' there right quick. You come along o' me, an' I got a couple o' thousan' cached that's all yours if you're in yellin' distance o' me at the end o' the first hundred mile. No? Well, so long, ye chechahco windbag, you! Next time you start swellin' up, ye want to be right sure that nobody 'round's got a pin with 'em."

Heenan elbowed his way out of the crowd, and hurried away to his cabin, on the edge of the camp by the river bank, packed his sledge with a light outfit of grub, and got into his furs. Then

he loosed five great Malemutes from the shed back of the cabin, and, cursing and laying about him with the heavy-leaded butt of his long, lashed whip, he forced the snarling, snapping brutes into the harness, and damned and lashed them into line, and a sullen, growling semblance of obedience. Then he stepped back to the rear of the sledge, and stood for a time looking thoughtfully up into the hard purple of the clear frosty sky.

"Twenty years!" he muttered. "Jeff Harden!" God A'mighty, it's a funny world!"

He laughed, and shook out his whip on the snow.

"Come on, ye yappin' lap dogs, you! Ye candy-fed poodles! Mush on! Get out o' this!"

The trail into Dan Larney's place lay straight up the valley southwest from Fairbanks. Larney's road house was on the banks of the river midway between where the Fairbanks-Valdez trail swung into the big valley, and the spot up the Tanana one hundred and eighty miles southwest where the Valdez-Eagle trail, by way of Mentasta Pass, crossed it.

That the distance from Fairbanks to Larney's was two hundred and fifty miles was a rough estimate, and probably within ten or fifteen miles of a correct one.

It was a little after ten o'clock on the evening of the twenty-second when Heenan left Fairbanks. It was clear, dead calm, and cold—around fifty below zero—and the snow was fine and hard. It was ideal weather for record mushing; the dogs were fresh, and they strained off up the valley at the top of their speed. Heenan alternately rode and ran. The exertion and the effect of the cold, cleansing drafts of air it stretched his lungs with, filled him with an intoxicating, nerve-tingling joy in himself; in the swift, sure swing and heave of his big legs; the lurch of his forward-swung shoulders in rhythmic lilt to the tune of his stride; the perfect, seemingly effortless action of his whole magnificent body as he kept pace with the flying dogs.

He whooped aloud; bawled snatches of song into the tremendous hush of the Northern winter night; snapped his whip and cursed his dogs with joyous vehemence. The fresh team answered to the mood of their driver, and raced on, yelping shrilly.

At three o'clock in the morning they were thirty miles from Fairbanks. The dogs were quiet now. Gone the exuberance of the first wild dash. They strained ahead with stretched necks and bushy tails uncurled and drooping. Beside them—behind—out in front, toiled Heenan. No more shouting of song now! His face was beginning to set, and lines in it that had been tiny, threadlike marks four hours before were etched in deep.

Occasionally one of the dogs, with a wary eye on its master, lagged, and ran slack in the harness. A sudden turn of the man's head; a sharp, short curse; the snap of the whip; the cry of the shirking dog as the lash bit, and then silence again save for the monotonous creaking of the sledge, the high whine of the steel runners, and the heavy breathing of man and dogs. The bitter, agonizing grind of the long, hard trail had begun!

Near to midnight, on the twenty-fourth, Heenan came in sight of a cabin on the left bank of the river about forty-five miles below Larney's. A light shone from the shack, and sparks were flying from the chimney. Heenan flogged his weary, staggering team up the bank; loosed them and fed them two salmon each, calling out a short greeting to a man who opened the door and looked out as he was feeding the dogs.

"I'll get you coffee made and put some grub on," the man called back, and shut the door.

Heenan finished caring for the team, trudged up to the cabin, and stumbled wearily in. The man bending over the stove looked up as Heenan entered. He was a tall, dark, well-built young fellow of twenty-seven or eight, with an intelligent, clean-cut face. Heenan laughed.

"Hello, Jimmy Phelan," he said. "How's tricks?"

Phelan stared in astonishment.

"Why—why, Bill Heenan! Well, of all— Where did you come from?"

"Fairbanks. I been winterin' there. Go on an' tend to that bacon, or I'll have nothin' but greasy soot for my supper."

Phelan turned back to the stove to flip the scorching meat, and Heenan sat down by the table, studying the young fellow quizzically.

"Been up to Larney's lately?" he asked suddenly.

Phelan started slightly.

"Yes. Just left there."

Heenan chuckled.

"How 'bout the weddin'? Comin' off to-morrow night, is it?"

Phelan's face paled.

"Yes," he answered shortly.

"Is that so? What's the matter with you? Change your mind, did ye?"

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, I heard you an' Dan's girl was kind o' soft both ways. Reckon ye backed out 'count the squaw in her when it comes to marryin', huh?"

"See here, Heenan, what—"

"Ah, don't go off half cocked! You're stuck on her; she's stuck on you. What are ye runnin' away for?"

"There wasn't anything for me to stay for. Dan wouldn't give his consent. He—"

"Wouldn't give his what?"

"His—consent. Wouldn't let me marry her. I offered—"

"Let! Let! Let! Why, ye poor boob, you, what's he got to do with it? What's he got to say about it?"

"What's he got to— Why, he's her father!"

"What about it? It's a free country, ain't it? Ye wanted her; why didn't ye take her?"

"I tried that, Bill; she wouldn't come with me. Dan was bound to have her marry Harden, and she wouldn't disobey her—"

"She want to marry Harden?"

Phelan groaned.

"Don't, Bill! That's too awful to think of. She's an educated girl, Bill;

a fine, sensitive woman! And this Harden— Heenan, it's downright murder! She'll never live through it! She's half insane now from—"

"An' ye run away an' left her! Great!"

"But, Bill, what could I do? She wouldn't—"

"What could ye do? The way ye talk, I don't think *you* could do one damn' thing! She wouldn't come with ye! Wouldn't! Wouldn't! Wouldn't! You're bigger'n she is, ain't ye? Think she's goin' to rope ye onto a sledge an' run away with *you*? Ye big boob, you! She gets in bad with old Dan an' this Harden party, an' then 'cause she don't come runnin' when you whistle, ye mush out with your tail 'tween your legs like a sick pup, an' let them two old roughnecks get away with their play!"

Heenan sprawled back in his chair and stared up at the smoke-blackened roof in disgusted silence. After a little time, he sat up straight very suddenly.

"Say, is that bunch o' Tananas o' Nikolaks still camped on that crick down this side o' Dan's place?" he asked excitedly.

"There's an Indian village there; yes. About five miles up—"

Heenan exploded in a sudden roar of laughter.

"Great!" he gurgled. "Son, I think you an' me's goin' to have a bunch o' fun. Ye had any sleep lately?"

"I— Yes, I woke up just now when I heard you—"

"Well, I ain't. You keep your peepers open, an' let me snooze for two hours. Then you rouse me out, an' me an' you'll go up to the weddin'. I'm all in. Keep that grub hot, and I'll eat when I wake up."

"To the wedding? Bill, what's up? What are you going to do?"

Heenan dropped into a bunk, and lay back with a deep sigh.

"Never ye mind what I'm goin' to do! Just you stick along o' me, an' if you ain't beat it out for somewhere else with Dan's girl in your blankets by this time to-morrow night, call me a liar!"



"Do—do you mean that, Bill?"

"Um!"

"Bill, if you can do that for me, I'll never——"

"Aw, ferget it! I ain't mused my legs off gettin' up here to do somethin' for you, Jimmy. I don't care who ye marry or don't marry; that ain't none o' my business. An' I don't care nothin' 'bout this girl o' Dan's, but listen to me, son: I been lookin' for this Jeff Harden party for nigh on twenty year, an' the night I find him ain't goin' to be his weddin' night! Hear me! Don't get the idea I'm doin' somethin' for ye, Jimmy. I ain't. I'm goin' to get square with Jeff Harden, an' you come in on the play; that's all."

"But, Heenan, how are you going to——"

"Shut up, an' lemme sleep, will ye? I'm tellin' ye you grab this girl o' Dan's an' beat it for a preacher; I back up your get-away. Now lemme sleep."

"Can we make it? Can we get there in time? She may be married before we——"

"If she's married when we get there, she'll be a widow when we leave! You win both ways."

"What did Harden——"

"Shut up!"

Larney's place on the upper Tanana was noisy with drunken talk and laughter at six o'clock on Christmas night. In the little bar were gathered a score of men; prospectors and trappers from the country round about, together with a few who were wintering at Dan's place. All were joyfully drunk. Larney himself was in the throes of a "crying jag." He was a big, gray-haired fellow, with large, humped shoulders, and a big-featured, deep-lined face that expressed, about equally, stubbornness and stupidity. He lurched back with his two elbows thrust behind him, resting on the bar, and addressed the crowd tearfully:

"An' that's what I get for bein' good to her! See? She's a squaw, ain't she? Sure she is. She's got yella hair an' blue eyes, but she's Siwash! Sure! An' I think the whole world o' that girl,

don't I? Sure I do! She's Siwash, mind ye, an' I send her 'below' to get her schoolin', an' pay for it all, an' give her every kind of a chance just's if she's plumb white, like she looks. Don't I? Sure I do. An' what do I get out of it? Answer me that! What do I get out of it? I'll tell ye what I get; listen: She comes back from 'below' las' summer, after I been keepin' her down there for seven year—ever since her mother died off—just's if she's white, an' what d'ye think?

"I go an' dig her up a man to marry with her; marry her, mind ye, an' her Siwash! Would ye think 't a man like Jeff, here, 'd marry Siwash? Would ye? Sure ye wouldn't! I'm good to that girl. I go an' get her as good a man's ever in the North to marry her; a man that'll settle down here along o' me so's she can be company for her old father, an' what do I get out of it? She goes an' wants to tie up with a young dude kid from outside; a dog-gone kid 't wanted to take her away from her old man't's been good to her just's if she was plumb white!

"An' does she thank me for goin' an' diggin' up Jeff, here, to marry up with her? Does she? Sure she don't! She's bawlin' her head off ever since I put it up to her. This here ought to be the best night o' her life, an' I bet she's upstairs now, bawlin' an' bawlin'! That's what ye get for bein' good to Siwash! Le's have a drink."

At the bar beside Larney were Jeff Harden and "Preacher Jack" Ebbets. He was an ugly-looking man, was Harden; huge, squat, and low-browed, with coarse, bristly gray hair, close-cropped, standing straight on his ill-shaped head peculiarly like the bristles on a hog's back. He was gloomy, and for the most part silent.

"Preacher Jack" was very drunk and extravagantly clerical in his manner. He was a sometime minister who had come into the country in search of gold, and stayed to become a squaw man and a drunkard, and go to the bad generally. He had been called on to officiate at the wedding. "Preacher Jack" gulped down the drink that Larney had

ordered, and then very gravely and with much difficulty scrambled up onto the bar, and, swaying perilously, held up his hand for silence.

"Ladies an—an' gentlemen," he mouthed out, with drunken solemnity, "we are gathered here on—on this night—I might say we are—come together, as it were—on this night, to be presen' at ver' solemn cer'mony! Ver' solemn! We behol' before us—grief-stricken an' upright father—weeping with shame at—at base conduc' of erring an—an' willful daughter! Mos' willful! We behol' happy bridegroom, our esteem' brother an' fellow cit'zen, Mr. Harden, whom we—we behol' before us. I might say—he is with us to-night—as it were—he is here—an' we—behol' him.

"There is but one dark blot on the 'scutcheon of this—of this—on the 'scutcheon. I have 'flicted with sickness, ver' bad sickness, an' I have consume' much strong water in hope of—hope of ult'mate cure of— That is—I mean to say 't I have drunk a lot of hooch, an' if I'm goin' to perform solemn cer'mony, have to get a move on or I'll be dead to worl'."

He lurched, and fell forward into Harden's arms as the drunken crowd cheered loudly. Harden set him on his feet, and nudged Larney.

"Hustle things up, Dan," he urged. "This fellow's right: he'll be all in pretty soon. Hustle her down into the front room, an' we'll get this over with. Go on, hustle!"

Larney nodded, swayed out of the barroom, and called up the little narrow stairway; he got no answer, and so stumbled up, cursing querulously, and opened the door of a room off the landing on the right. On the floor of the room, gagged and bound, lay his squaw. Dan bent over her, half sobered by the shock, and tore the gag from her mouth. "What's the matter? What's up? Where's Nellie?" he cried.

The squaw shook her head.

"Ahm not know dat. Ahm t'ink mebbyshe ain't here, huh?"

"She ain't here? What— Who roped ye up?"

"Ahm not know dat."

"Ye don't know who tied ye up?"

"Ya-as, t'ank you. Ahm not know hees nam'."

"His name? His name? Who was it? Who tied ye up? Where's Nell?"

"Ahm not know where she Nellie be. Ahm not know hees nam'. Heem beeg white man. Hees tie me up so; tie she Nellie up so lak me. Hees tak she Nellie weeth heem; hees don't tak me. Dass all Ahm know."

"He took her with him? How long's he been gone? How long?"

"Ahm not know, t'ank you. Not ver' long tam, mebbysso."

Larney gripped her threateningly by the throat.

"Listen to me, you, an' tell me the straight o' this!" he commanded. "Was it Phelan done this? Was it? Was it Phelan?"

"Na. Heem not Phela'. Heem big white man. Ahm not know hees nam', t'ank you."

Larney tore out the door and fairly fell down the steep, narrow stairs.

"Somebody's run off with Nell," he yelled into the barroom. "Scatter out, the whole bunch of ye, an' see if ye can pick up a trail. Somebody's nabbed her. Hustle out an'—"

Harden grabbed him by the shoulders, and shook him savagely.

"Run off with Nell? What d'ye mean? That pup of a Phelan——"

"It wasn't him, Jeff; somebody else. Oonak saw him. He can't be long gone; I see her not an hour back, an' told her to get ready. He can't get away. You circle off up to the left, an' I'll look downriver. One of us'll pick up his trail. Hustle!"

Harden rushed out the door, and Larney lingered behind for a moment to give orders.

"Get your dogs together, all of ye," he called out. "Get all ready to mosh when we make his trail. Hustle up!"

He turned and hurried out after Harden.

The crowd was much too drunk to fully understand the import of what he had said or to carry out his orders if they had understood it.

When Larney rushed in, half an hour

later, with the news that he had found the marks on the snow half a mile below where two dog teams had evidently waited for some time, and from which spot the trail of the kidnapers ran off downriver, he found not a dog hitched, and not a man in the place sober enough to stand unsupported, let alone join in the chase or help make preparations for it. Harden returned soon after Larney, and the two men got together two teams of five dogs each, took a rifle apiece, and sped away into the north-east, following the trail that Larney had discovered.

Heenan and Phelan came in sight of Larney's place about half past four on Christmas afternoon. It was very cold, and there was a slight frost haze in the air that rendered objects at a distance of fifty yards very indistinct. On a knoll a half mile from the house Heenan called a halt. The shouting and singing of the men at Larney's came to their ears clearly over the snow.

"You stay here an' wait for me," Heenan ordered. "An' feed them dogs up while I'm gone. That's all you got to do."

Phelan clutched his arm.

"My God! Hear those drunken brutes yelling up there! And she's there alone with them! Maybe she's—"

"Ye run off an' left her with 'em, didn't ye?"

Phelan shuddered.

"Don't, Bill! Don't! What are we going to do?"

"We ain't goin' to do nothin'. You're goin' to stay here an' watch them dogs till I get back."

"But what are you going to do, Heenan? Tell me!" the boy begged.

Heenan grinned.

"I'm goin' to show ye some real love-makin'," he said.

He put out his hand and patted Phelan's shoulder reassuringly.

"You stay right here an' watch them dogs, an' don't fret," he said kindly.

"You're all right, son, but you're in bad up here. When we get out o' this muss you blow for 'below' an' stay there. You're a good kid, but you're too far

away from policemen an' street cars for your own good. Now, mind; stay here an' wait!"

Heenan turned, and walked away in the gloom. Phelan fed both Heenan's team and his own, and then walked up and down over the snow in a perfect agony of apprehension and uncertainty. What would Heenan do? What could he do? What possible chance would he have up there alone where the volume of the shouting spoke the presence of a large number of men, and all of them Larney's friends?

He shuddered at the sound of every drunken shout that came to his ears. The girl he loved was up there alone with that wild gang!

What would Heenan do? He listened eagerly, straining his ears for some new note in the shouting that would give notice of Heenan's arrival; some hint of what was going on. There was none. He waited for what seemed to him ages, and what was in reality about three-quarters of an hour, when he made out a distorted shape through the half dark, moving toward him over the snow. He crouched, startled, and called out sharply:

"Hello! Who is it?"

Heenan's voice answered:

"Me, ye damn' fool! Shut up!"

Phelan rushed toward him. Heenan had appeared as a weird shape seen through the gloom because he carried a girl in his arms; a white-faced girl, with wide-set blue eyes and a wealth of bright gold hair. Phelan snatched her from Heenan's arms and crushed her to him.

"Nellie! Sweetheart! Thank God!" he said fervently. "Speak to me, sweetheart. It's me, Jimmy! Your own boy. Don't you know me, dear? Why don't you speak?"

Heenan answered him.

"She don't speak to ye, sweetheart, dearie," he mocked, "for the right good reason 't she's got a gag in her mouth, an' can't."

"A gag? Oh!"

Phelan fumbled compassionately for the knot in the thin strip of cloth that stretched the girl's lips cruelly. Hee-

nan gripped him by the collar and flipped him to one side.

"Yes, a gag on! An' it'll stay there till I get fixed to take it out."

He leaned down and looked into the girl's eyes.

"Goin' to behave?" he inquired. "Goin' to beat it away from here with your Jimmy boy, an' not act nasty, an' put up a howl if I take that gag out o' your mouth?"

The girl nodded a quick assent, and Heenan drew a long, thin-bladed knife from a sheath in his parkay, and slid the point under the gag where it passed over her cheek.

"Reckon from the look of ye, ye want the use o' them lips right now," he chuckled, as he slit the strip of cloth.

The girl purred a throaty little heart cry, and threw her arms about Phelan's neck.

"Ah, Jimmy! Jimmy!" she sobbed. "My boy! I thought you never would come, Jimmy! I was so scared!"

"Cut out the mush," Heenan ordered, grinning. "I know it tastes good, but we got to climb out o' this. Bed her down on my sleigh, son, an' we'll be hikin'."

"They—they'll follow us, won't they, Bill?" Phelan asked anxiously, as he led the girl to Heenan's sledge.

"If I didn't know right well that Jeff Harden'd follow me up, ye can bet I wouldn't be leavin' camp. I ain't hunted him twenty year to let him get away from me now."

"But our dogs are worn out, Bill. Won't they catch us?"

"I aim to see to it that they do. But not this side the Indian village off to the right on that crick below here. We got to hustle to make that. Y'all set?"

The girl on the sledge looked up at Phelan from under the fur robes that he had swathed her with.

"Ah, Jimmy! Jimmy! I hate to leave poor old daddy like this," she said. "He's rough and ignorant, but he's been kind to me in his own way, dear. He doesn't understand, that's all. I wish that—"

"Don't ye worry 'bout leavin' Dan," Heenan interrupted her. "He'll be with

ye in a few hours, an' he'll tote ye home an' marry ye off to Phelan, with his blessin', or I'm a liar. You're wise to your dad, all right. He's an old rough-neck, an' he don't know nothin' but squaws an' the like; but his heart's as big as his neck is rough, once ye jolt him hard enough to jam the straight o' things into his thick nut. I aim to jolt him. Y'all ready?"

Phelan laughed happily.

"I don't know what Bill's going to do or how he's going to do it," he said. "But if he says he's going to bring things around all right, I'm ready to believe him. How on earth did you ever get her away from there, Heenan?"

Bill moved up alongside the sledge, and picked up his whip.

"Cinch!" he said. "That gang up there's all stewed to their ears; their eyebrows are in swimmin'! I went in an' swiped the young lady, here, an' come away with her. Nothin' to it!" He shook out his whip, and grinned. "Nothin' ever tastes half as good as the stuff ye steal, son, an' the funny part is that stuff ye can steal always likes to be stole. Whenever ye want anything that wants you, son, go get it!" He snapped his whip out over the heads of the team. "Hi-ya-a-ah! Get out o' this, ye poor, overworked mutts! Get on! Mush!"

They were two hours making the ten miles down the river to where the little creek that Heenan had spoken of ran in from the right. Here Heenan called a halt, and, ordering silence, stood listening intently. After a moment, the far-off yelp of a dog came to his ears, and he laughed aloud.

"They're comin'," he said. "A good five mile back; we'll make it easy. Get goin'."

They turned to the right, and followed the narrow, tortuous course of the frozen stream. An hour later, they came in sight of the Indian village. It was a collection of small log huts huddled together on a bench above the creek on the right. A score of figures issued from the different cabins, and stood silently waiting as the two sledges drew

up. Heenan stepped forward, and called out something in the Indian tongue. One of the figures advanced toward him in answer, and stood talking with Heenan in low tones for several minutes. Then Heenan walked back to where Phelan waited beside the sledge.

"All right," he said briefly. "Everything's lovely. That buck I was chin-nin's Nikolak Shaman; big chief, ye know. I knowed I was in right, if he was still livin'. They're goin' to empty that third shack, there, for you an' the lady. Get in there, an' get your court-in' done. That's all you got to do."

The Indian, Nikolak, called out what was evidently an order to the group about him, and much hasty scurrying ensued. Phelan helped the girl from the sledge, and together they followed Heenan to the shack he had indicated. When they reached the door, a buck and two squaws came out, waddled away without a word, and disappeared into another cabin. Phelan and the girl entered. As they did so, the staccato yelping of dogs came clearly to their ears from down the creek in the direction from which they had come. Heenan laughed exultantly.

"They're comin'," he said. "Keep inside here an' keep still. Don't butt into the muss, whatever comes up; I'll tend to things."

The girl laid her hand on his arm.

"Don't—don't hurt daddy. Please!" she begged.

"I aim to damage his feelin's," Heenan answered, and shut the door on them.

He hurried down past the irregular row of huts to the farther end, where one much larger than the rest was situated. This was the council, or "Shaman," house. In front, he met Nikolak, and spoke with him earnestly for several minutes. The yelping of the pursuing dogs was sounding from very near.

Nikolak passed inside the large hut, and Heenan stood out in front alone, waiting. The dim outline of two dog teams, each followed by a man, appeared in the gloom around the sharp

bend in the creek. There was a crisp "Whoa!" A whispered consultation between the two men, and then, leaving their teams out on the frozen creek bed, they mounted cautiously up the bench toward the cabins. Heenan stepped out of the deep shadow in front of the Shaman house, and called to them.

"Hello, you Dan Larney," he sang out hospitably. "Come right along up. We're waitin' for ye."

The two men stopped. Larney's voice came back:

"Who is it?"

"Never ye mind who it is, Danny. I reckon you'll know me when ye get in the light. Come right on up to the pow-wow shanty, here. We're all ready for ye."

Heenan turned back, and entered the big house, closing the low door behind him. The two men outside whispered together for a few moments, and then came on, holding their rifles warily in front of them. Larney stepped forward and knocked on the door of the shack Heenan had entered, and it was instantly opened from inside. The two men saw a ring of Indians squatted around the walls of the hut. They saw no white man.

"Come in," a voice bade them. "No good stallin' now. Nobody's goin' to hurt ye, Danny."

"Who are ye?" Larney asked.

"Come on in where it's warm an' have a look."

The two men stepped in, Larney first, and the door was thrown shut after them by the man who stood hidden behind it. Larney looked at him, and dropped his rifle on the ground.

"Bill Heenan!" he cried joyfully. "Bill! You old fool, you!"

The effect of Heenan's appearance on Harden was much different. He stood still, staring at him wide-eyed for a moment while the blood paled out of his face, and then suddenly raised his rifle. Heenan was on top of him as he made the move, knocking the muzzle of the rifle aside as he sprang, and the ball spat into the big shelf log that was built into the cabin all the way around about two feet above the ground. A

moment later the two men were on the ground together; Heenan on top, with his man tight pinioned beneath him.

He slipped a hand in the bosom of his parkay, and a knife blade glinted in the dim light as he drew it forth. He held it high, poised to strike, and stared down into the blanched face of the man under him. He stared long, with an expression of almost bewilderment in his eyes. Then suddenly he grinned, and slipped the knife back in its sheath.

"Jeff," he said, "I been hatin' ye so long an' steady, I swear to God 't now I see ye, ye seem like an old pal 't had been knockin' around with me this past twenty year."

He patted the man all over in search of a weapon, and then released him.

"Get up, Jeff," he ordered. "I ain't goin' to kill ye, but when I get done with ye you'll wish I had."

Larney looked on in bewilderment.

"I didn't know you an' Jeff was on the outs," he said, a little vaguely. "Say, listen, Bill; some skunk ran off with my girl an'—"

"I got her."

"You got—"

"That's what I said. Say, you whisky-guzzlin' old roughneck, you! Your girl's got a chance to marry up with a good young guy regular. What d'ye want to give her away to an old mutt like Harden, here, for? An old guy that can't marry nobody?"

"Jeff's goin' to marry her, Bill."

"He can't, I'm tellin' ye. His wife's livin'."

"That's a lie!" Harden spoke up. "I never had a wife."

Heenan laughed.

"Is that right? My! My! Your memory sure is some bad, Jeff!" He turned and called out: "Mary! Hey, you, Mary, come here!"

An old, bent, startlingly hideous squaw, with witchlike, stringy gray hair and a toothless mouth, rose from among the Indians squatted around the walls and hobbled forward. Heenan put a kind hand on her shoulder. There was a peculiar reminiscent tenderness in his voice when he spoke.

"Know her, Jeff?" he inquired. "No?"

I reckon not. She don't look much like the best-lookin' full-blood squaw that was ever born out o' the Stickenes, does she? Don't look a whole lot like the girl you an' me fought an' bled each other for twenty year back! Poor old Mary! They wither up quick! She don't look a lot like the squaw you stole off o' me out o' my camp down on Chicagof, hey? Ye ———, you! Don't look a lot like the squaw ye shot me up for, an' left me for dead there on the shore while ye made your get-away over onto Baranoff! Don't look like the squaw ye was married to by the priest there in Sitka! Married—yes! I said married! Don't look——"

"That's a lie!" Harden shouted. "I never married her! I was drunk when ——— It's a lie! Ye can't prove it!"

"Ye was drunk when ye married her, hey? Yeh! I bet ye was. But old Mary wasn't, was ye, Mary? Hey? You bet not! Mary's some foxy old party, Jeff; she's bummed around a right lot since ye left her the year after ye took her off me, an' finally she hooked up in here with the Tananas. I run across her in here about five year gone. But she never lost that piece o' paper with writin' on it that the priest give her when you an' her stood up together down there in Sitka, did ye, Mary? Ye bet she didn't! Show him that paper with writin' on it, Mary; the one the priest give ye."

Grinning and chuckling idiotically, the hideous-looking old squaw drew a dirty and yellowed piece of rolled parchment from among her rags, and held it out to Heenan.

Bill waved it away.

"That's all right, Mary. Hang onto it. Jeff, here, knows what it is, all right, hey, Jeff?"

Harden stared, horrified.

"I—I was drunk," he whimpered. "I was—drunk. I didn't mean—ye hadn't ought to——"

Larney turned upon him, his face convulsed with rage.

"Is that right?" he shouted. "You're married to this old squaw, an' ye come to me after my little girl? My little



girl that's plumb white! Why, I got a good mind to——"

"Cut it out, ye pig-headed old rough-neck," Heenan interrupted him, with a laugh. "Ye was shovin' her off onto Harden yourself! Why didn't ye let her alone, an' let her marry Phelan, like she wanted to?"

"Aw, Heenan!" Larney protested aggrievedly. "He's a damn' dude! He ain't my kind, Bill. He'd take her out o' the country with him, an'——"

"No, he ain't your kind, Danny, old son, an' neither is she. She's white, Danny; she's schooled white down in a white man's country; she's whiter in her ways than you ever was, Dan. I'm your kind; me an' Jeff, here. Old roughnecks that don't know nothin' but squaws an' dogs! Our ways ain't white, Dan; we been in the brush too long. You'd be worse off in a white man's town 'n any full-blood Siwash, Dan! If ye was white in your ways, ye wouldn't be livin' off up here on the edge o' nowhere with the money you got together. You're an old squaw man, Dan, an' ye got a girl that's clean white! You're a chicken, an' ye got a duck on your hands ye don't know what to do with. Be a sport, old son; you can't swim in the kind o' water that suits her; let her go. Phelan's her kind; let him have her."

The tears were in Larney's faded and rather stupid old eyes.

"I reckon you're right, Bill," he said huskily. "Ye always did have better sense'n me somehow. I'll do whatever ye say, Bill. But where——"

"Will ye let Phelan have her?"

"Sure I will, Bill. Where is he?"

"He's in the camp here. No backin' out now!"

"No. Sure not! Where's Nell?"

"She's with Phelan down in the third shack this way from the other end. Go on over, an' give 'em a good word. I'll be with ye in a minute. Get 'em out, an' get ready to mush."

"Sure I will, Bill. Say, we'll go back an' have a weddin' anyhow, hey, Bill? 'Preacher Jack' he's up to the camp, an' if he ain't too stewed when we get back we'll have a weddin' to-night, anyhow, huh? Sure we will!"

He turned and started for the door, but paused in front of Harden and drew himself up with a ludicrous assumption of dignity.

"Yo' old squaw man, you," he said scornfully. "Ye got an awful crust comin' 'round tryin' to marry up with a white man's white girl! You ain't no better'n Siwash! I got a good mind to—— Yah! You're too ornery to muss with!"

Old Dan turned from him disgustedly, and hurried out the door. Heenan sighed and picked up Harden's rifle from the floor. He straightened up, and looked at Jeff thoughtfully.

"I reckon you an' me's somewhere near square, Jeff," he said softly. "Ye sure done me an awful piece o' dirt, Jeff, an' I ain't forgot none of it. If I'd o' got ye ten year back I'd o' croaked ye. I always been aimin' to when I found ye, but my feelin's is gettin' kind o' withered up; some like poor old Mary's face, I reckon. I don't hate ye as bad as I thought I did. I'm done with ye, Jeff. We're quits! Ye stole my woman off me; ye got her; now, damn ye, keep her!"

He passed out of the shack, and slammed the door behind him. Larney, with his daughter and Phelan, were moving down toward the waiting sledges. They called to Heenan.

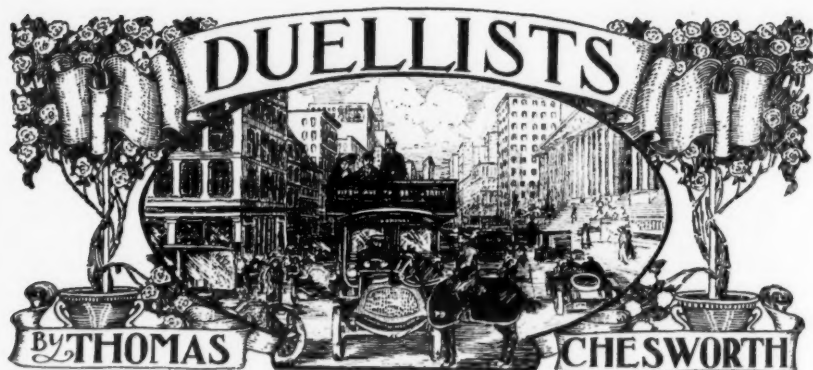
"I'm comin'," Heenan answered.

He stared out over the snow a little wearily.

"I start out to make a killin'," he muttered, "an' I wind up by pullin' off a weddin'! God A'mighty! It's a funny world! A funny dog-gone world! Poor old Mary!"

He sighed, and trudged away toward his team.





**S**HE boarded the green motor bus just as it was about to start, somewhat to the surprise of the conductor—or that sophisticated quality in conductors which takes the place of human surprise—for her Parisian gown and air of high breeding seemed rather correlated to a private vehicle. But the conductor had not observed what went before, or he might have guessed the action to have been one of impulse. For, pausing at the foot of the stone steps she had just descended, she gazed vaguely, with a touch of melancholy in her fine face, across the square toward the flush of sunset, and became in the same moment aware of the eyes of a male, well tailored, wearing a soft shirt and soft felt hat, who looked anything between thirty and forty, and whose neatly trimmed and pointed brown beard probably made him look a little older than he was. There was a conscious twinkle in the eyes with which he traced her glance beyond the tree to one great, pale star set like a lamp on the coast of night; and when, with heightened color, she glided to the bus and took a seat on top, he shrugged, and followed her.

They were the only outside passengers. As the bus started, he lit a cigarette, settled himself easily, and gazed along the avenue, as if it were his sole life's interest; while she, without any perceptible glance in his direction,

smiled faintly, as if in acceptance of a situation. And when presently the conductor came to collect the fares, she opened her satchel, closed it again at once, and uttered a tiny cry of despair; but the cry had scarcely left her lips before the male, with a murmured apology, paid for her; the conductor, as he went, including the girl and satchel in a look of bitter skepticism.

"How can I thank you?" she said, her face—a very beautiful one—showing the right degree of charming confusion between frankness and diffidence—this, and something besides.

"By helping me," he returned promptly, "to solve a problem."

"I?" Her dark eyes opened wide.

"You, madam," he assured her firmly, "if you will so far honor me."

"But I know so little of—of mathematics."

"The problem," said he, "is not mathematical, but egoistic—a problem of vanity. I quarreled with my fiancée."

"Of feminine vanity, then?"

"Naturally. She claims exclusive proprietary right in my—devotion."

"How absurd!" And she laughed on a low, melodious note.

"Let me say," he continued, passing over the irony, "that I am a painter, and that the accident of success has befallen me—that is to say, works of mine hang in certain of the world's galleries and in the salons of Chicago millionaires. My fiancée—Hélène is her

name—has I know not what of girlish charm, with all the advantages which her father's wealth could give her, and she is perfectly sincere in her enthusiasm for art and her desire to comprehend and make allowances for what is called the artistic temperament, which is a temperament of indecisions. Nevertheless, Hélène is jealous."

She gave him a quick glance; their eyes met, and they both laughed.

"But there is, of course, no other woman?" she suggested.

"This avenue," he said irrelevantly, after a moment's silence, "has its own atmosphere of privacy, refinement, gentility, so that one wonders by what incongruity it finds itself in this city. There is no street quite like it in the world, as there is—thank God!—no city in the world like New York. Another woman? You shall judge.

"We were fellow students, 'the other' and I, under Fournier; and she was as poor and enthusiastic as I, and a great deal more clever. There were only three of us Americans in the atelier. Stanford was the third, and his presence there was a joke. His mother thought he was a genius of painting; his father—the railway man—thought he was a fool. Stanford himself knew that he was neither, but he was profoundly willing to obey his mother's dictum—for the fun of Paris and the Quartier. A good fellow! His dinners were—oh, what a change from the table d'hôte à vingt sous in which the other two luxuriated before his coming—you see, he had money.

"Nevertheless, he would sometimes, 'for the fun of it,' luxuriate also; and then, the twenty-cent meal over, gravely propose that we should all three go somewhere, and *cat*. Ah, and she was proud as Lucifer! Everything must be done with incredible finesse. Sometimes Stanford's hospitality would wear for her, I think, the air of an obligation. That was the end of the banquets for a little while. And during that time she might be missing, too, from the 'vingt sous,' and I knew that her letter had not arrived on time—but with a girl like that, what could one do?

"'When Fodora and you marry,' said Stanford to me once in her presence; and then, my word, there was a hurricane! On the other hand, I sometimes fancied she was looking at me—with an air—with an expression in those grave eyes of hers; and many times I looked at her; but—you see what this lack of money means.

"Well, one Sunday during a gay excursion to Fontainebleau, Stanford cries: 'Fodora, marry me!' And Fodora's eyes flash at me, and her brilliant smile flashes upon him—she was half French, you know—and she claps her hands, and says: 'Yes!' And the strange thing is, it is no joke. They marry."

He snapped a finger and thumb to express the suddenness of it, and seemed to swallow something very hard.

His listener sat with tight-closed lips, reflective. He scanned her face anxiously, but could make nothing of it.

"This, I presume," she said, at last, "is part of your defense against Hélène's"—she stumbled over the word—"jealousy?"

"You—yes, you may take it so."

"But," she smiled, "with what an incriminating charm you invest those student days! How one feels the need, from Hélène's point of view, to 'make allowances for' a certain kind of temperament."

"Yes, please make allowances, and please continue to identify yourself with Hélène; it may help to an adjustment."

The delicate satire of her glance conveyed that she would find no difficulty in this.

"And now conceive that, after a few years, in greater part of which I was an anchorite of art, buried from the world, and working like a fiend, and in which Stanford steps into casual millions left by his father—after this interval comes news that Fodora has been for some time a widow. She is no longer, it seems, an artist, but a generous patron and connoisseur with well-defined opinions. I was prepared for the opinions. They had been manifest in the old days in the form of an artis-

tic conscience. And one day—conceive my astonishment—I receive by mail a curt request that I shall decorate her new house with a cycle from the Arthurian legends. An appointment is made to discuss the matter.

"Other appointments follow, owing"—he hesitated—"to the 'opinions,' Mrs. Stanford has her conception of the legend and her conception of the treatment, which are not mine. We visit art galleries together, looking for precedents, justifications; we are seen together once or twice at a Broadway restaurant; Fodora's sister-in-law is always with her, but there is, nevertheless, a pretty little story in the papers—the same papers that announced my engagement to Hélène—several weeks before it occurred—in two front-page columns, with photographs, which—*Dieu merci!*—were not ours. And so comes the misunderstanding; and when I visit Hélène I find myself in a region of ice and silence—no questions, no chance to explain, nothing." He hesitated a moment, and then, with an inquisitive, humorous eye upon her: "How does my defense sound?"

This time she gave him a steady look.

"It sounds—you will pardon me"—she paused for a word, and plumped out: "Fishy."

He laughed—ruefully.

"I am speaking, of course," she hastened to add, "from Hélène's point of view."

"To which you adapt yourself with deuced uncomfortable closeness."

"But you are ready to swear—to give Hélène your word of honor—that you have no—no love for—for this Latin Quarter woman, this Fodora?"

His embarrassment was only momentary.

"But the absurdity of it!" he evaded. "There was never, even in the old days, a whisper of love between Fodora and me. She was not, I think, so constituted. Her loves, her passions, were mental—of the soul—"

"She married."

"But not," he said softly, "not, I think, for love."

"For money, then?"

"Money means something to us all—to her less than to any one whom I ever knew."

"Then it is possible"—his traveling companion deliberated—"that she married, as a man may take alcohol, to abate a pain."

He hung over the point for a moment, and then shrugged.

"I have not yet mentioned Mowchine," said he abruptly.

She repeated the name with curiosity and a furtive glance at him.

"The young musician, prize winner at the Conservatoire, acclaimed by several continents—including that Continent of Highest Appeal, Manhattan—as a musical prodigy, and, notwithstanding all this, a genius. You have seen Rembrandt's 'Young Painter'? It is Mowchine, the seer of invisible things, touched by them to sacred tenderness. Now, if I sought for cause of jealousy I—"

"You think, then," she said quickly, "that your Hélène—"

"There is ground for—conjecture."

The long "Oh!" she gave contained many things; she seemed to revolve possibilities. Then suddenly she looked about her.

"I must leave the bus in a moment," said she, "and you have not yet stated in precise terms the problem you mentioned."

"The problem? Let me see. Ah, yes, it is this: Fodora and I are also estranged for the moment because of our antagonistic ideas about the Arthurian cycle. I confess that I do not enjoy the estrangement, and query: Shall I adopt her views or hold my artistic principles inviolable?"

She considered.

"I have an instinct that she will yield to your vision of the subject, and that this is not the true source of trouble between Fodora and you; the pictures only supply her with an excuse for the expression of a deeper point of irritation. Moreover, what you have just stated is not, it seems to me, the problem at all."

"What, then?"

He watched her while her face was

slowly dyed with a beautiful pink flush. The bus stopped. She rose.

"Which of these women do you love?" she said. "That is the problem, and only yourself can solve it. Good-by."

"Will you not say *au revoir*?"

"Good-by," she repeated, "until you have solved the problem."

"Wait!" he cried. But she was gone.

He left the bus at Central Park, and walked slowly westward with a light in his eyes and a quiver of a smile on his lips.

"It was good!" said he. "And she can use the foils. And she grows more elusive, and lovely, and desirable, and charming, and——"

His thoughts took on an expansive poetical quality and dissolved in the evening light, which was soft, cool, transparent; rich convolutions of summer foliage bloomed upon the white afterglow, where, faint fires infinitely deep and fair, glimmered the later stars.

"By Pluto! The sun's coming back," he exclaimed, as the foliage was lit by a sudden sunset red which as suddenly turned to emerald green, and revealed, on closer inspection, an electric sign advertising biscuits, underwear, or real estate in Elysium, New Jersey. "No, it's only dear old New York," he added, with a breath of relief, "decking herself in evening costume with her taste of a South Sea anthropophage. And now," he glanced at his watch, "to see why *Hélène* is so anxious to see me."

An hour later he entered his "studio apartments," turned on the light, spoke foolish and happy words to an unfinished marble *Eros*, and then raised a curtain from the portrait of a girl who met him with a glimmer of black eyes and the shine of a gold band encircling her black hair. It was a face of

haunted deeps with a mysterious inner light; finely human, too. You would have said that the girl was smiling over a secret that hurt. A remarkable piece of work, with that wonderful lifelikeness of visioned and rendered *character*. And it was the face of the woman on the bus.

"So it was to abate a pain," he brooded.

Then he sat down and wrote a letter:

TO MY LADY OF THE BUS: I have just come from *Hélène*. She was all contrition for her mood of "ice and silence." There was the prettiest of reconciliations, leading by ways of tenderness, remorse, self-abasement, and tears to another breach, this time a permanent one. She loves *Mowchine*.

Of course I released her from our engagement, which was never more than an amicable compact between two extremely pleasant people who amused each other very much and had no other attachments.

I am glad it is *Mowchine*. Why? I will tell you. *Mowchine* is a reincarnation.

Recall that other *me* from the shadows—from the Latin Quarter days—the dreamer, the passionate idealist, hungry for a divine something. That is *Mowchine*. *Hélène* is the response to this hunger. And in giving her to him—superb egoism!—I gave her to myself, to that other self of the shadows, who hungered in vain.

My "response" was there, in those days, yes; she lived, and moved, and breathed, and sometimes joined me in the table d'hôte à vingt sous; but I dared not reach forth my hands to touch her, for the hands were empty of fortune or achievement. And so she went her way.

And now, when both fortune and achievement are mine, when I find her again, we pretend to each other that we have grown cynical, we fence, we play at quarreling over a foolish Arthurian legend in paint, we speak—O god of comedy!—as strangers on a bus.

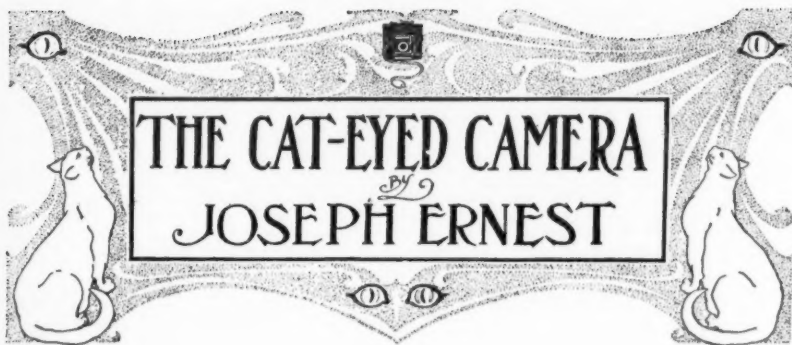
Fodora, may I come to you? You cannot say no—I paid your fare; you owe me ten cents.

This he sent by special messenger, who later returned with an answer:

Come—for your ten cents.

FODORA.





# THE CAT-EYED CAMERA

BY JOSEPH ERNEST

**A**FTER all, what man can be sure of the affections of his sweetheart—or of his wife for that matter? Of course, we are always sure at first. In that wonderful time that comes to every man of average good fortune, when he wanders home late at night with his head in lilac clouds, winged cupids caroling in his ears, and blush roses springing from the cracks between the paving stones under his feet, he no more dreams that the love that is promised him could change than he is able to envisage the death of his own devotion. And yet, you know, the least turn of fate—

But I started to tell about that trouble of Dick Holland's. Professor Richard Holland, with half the alphabet to follow, is his designation in the reference books. But at that time he was by no means the eminent and dignified physicist he has since become. He had, it is true, a kind of also-ran reputation as an investigator of the properties of the rarer metals, and he worked hard. Otherwise he was a big, ugly, broad-shouldered fellow, with a cheerful, lopsided grin, and one ear a little crumpled in a dispute with some visiting quarter backs.

This last, by the way, was a sign of his future eminence. It is notable how frequently the man who is going to be a great scholar or scientist begins his career by getting crooked at football.

We met quite accidentally after los-

ing touch with each other for more than a year, and the first news of importance he had for me was that he was going to be married. He had even a photograph handy, and exhibited it with the air of a connoisseur unveiling a rare work of art.

"She's sufficiently picturesque," I admitted. "Your taste appears to have changed. You don't seem to believe any longer in the purely intellectual passion."

This had been an old topic of contention between us, and he punched me scientifically in the short ribs.

"I was a kid then," he grinned. "A girl can be intellectual without having a face to scare burglars. And she's not short on brains at that. But come round to dinner to-night, and you'll see for yourself. I've learned a lot of things since you went abroad, and I'll possibly show you a trick or two that's new in another direction as well."

That was more than sufficient inducement, and I promised to be there.

He made me take her into dinner, smiling his whimsical smile at the awe that I suppose must have betrayed itself in my face. For she was even more handsome than her photograph, a splendid, upstanding young woman, who positively glowed with health and vitality. She had rich, dark-red hair, and violet eyes, and a skin that shone like white satin. It appeared that magnificent physique was a family heirloom, for her aunt, who sat opposite and



monopolized Holland's conversation when he wasn't grinning at me, was one of those rare bouncing dowagers who carry themselves like ships in full sail. She towered away above Holland's gray-bearded uncle, who sat at the head of the table trying to appear as if he enjoyed entertaining women—with considerable success for such a shattered old misogynist.

The other guest was Maynard Ingram, a rather handsome youngster, who had stultified a fine scholastic record by inheriting wealth and an incurable idleness.

"I'm trying hard to impress Dick's friends favorably," said Miss Willard—Dallas Willard was her name.

But the look she turned on me made me feel more like a small child playing with toys on the carpet than a judge of Dick Holland's matrimonial prospects.

"Men are horribly jealous of their chums," she went on. "They think that any girl who aspires to marry one of them must be a designing creature."

I admitted that the marriage of a friend was always a heartrending, though fascinating, spectacle.

"But what can you say," I asked, "in face of the fatuous assurance they give you that it really will make no difference to their friendships? Of course you know they are wrong, but they look so confidently happy when they tell you that you haven't the heart to say so."

She smiled across the table at Holland, and he returned the smile in that rapt way—but you know the way people smile when they are in love. Hardly in the best of taste, I sometimes think, but you wouldn't expect perfect good taste in a man who had scarlet fever, either. And Holland's attention was divided through trying to follow one of his uncle's interminable horticultural anecdotes while he looked at her.

"He's almost as absurdly happy, poor boy, as if he had discovered a really new metal," whispered Miss Willard, when he turned his head away to await the point of the old man's story.

"Holland is always discovering new metals," laughed young Ingram, on the

other side of me. "They invariably turn out to be nothing but selenium in the end."

"You shouldn't be too confident," returned Holland, "that they always will."

"I'm ready to bet," young Ingram said, leaning forward to look at Miss Willard, "that one of your finds will prove to be gold. But fortunately that's nothing new, either."

Somehow it seemed to be the natural thing to invent subtle compliments for Miss Willard. I liked and admired Holland, he was so human for a physicist; but the more I talked to the girl the more I felt that he was guilty of being either indecently lucky or indecently presumptuous in attempting to achieve absolute ownership of any natural object of such utterly satisfactory beauty.

It seemed to me an antisocial act, like forming a predatory trust, or locking up a Velasquez in the cellar.

And she wasn't a fool, either, because I was going to tell her this, but in the drawing-room she steered me so cleverly on to a discussion of Holland's overwhelming excellences that I forgot it. Then she played and sang for us in a rich contralto, with deep notes like an organ, so that none of us noticed until she had finished that Holland had slipped away.

"He's arranging a surprise," I said. "He hinted to-day that he might have some new marvel to show me."

"Perhaps this camera thing is part of it," said Miss Willard, rising and crossing the room to an ebony corner cupboard.

On top of it I noticed a queer contrivance like a snapshot camera. We followed her and examined it with curiosity, for it was plainly no ordinary camera. In the place where the lens should have been was an object like a great cat's eye, with a weird, greenish shimmer in it, and a dark streak down the center that grew now broader, now narrower. It had a sinister quality of being alive that affected me strangely.

"How quaint!" said the girl, and raised a pink, polished finger tip to touch it.

There was an angry buzzing from the instrument, and she recoiled with an involuntary little scream.

"It moves!" she gasped.

And in fact it was moving all the time. In the instant that her finger touched it the movement was checked, and showed us that what had appeared to be an eye was nothing more solid than three slim metal hoops revolving so rapidly and silently that they seemed to be an unbroken sphere. One arm carried a strip of greenish iridescent metal, and the other two were dead black, and carried two tiny silvered mirrors.

When the girl's finger was removed the rapid revolution recommenced, the whirring became inaudible as the hoops gathered speed, until once more the aperture seemed to be filled with that gleaming green cat's eye. Ingram shrugged his shoulders involuntarily as he turned away.

"Ugh! The thing's uncanny," he said. "It stares at you as if it were photographing the thoughts in your brain."

"What's that?" said Holland, returning as he spoke. "Thought reading? Well, perhaps you're not very far wrong. It isn't anything so wonderful, but perhaps it will produce the same results as clairvoyance some day."

"What is it for, anyway?" queried Ingram.

Holland shook his head with that curious air of mystery that so many scientific demonstrators manage to acquire. Perhaps their common desire to astonish proceeds from a pardonable touch of theatricality with which they seek to reward their tedious and lonely researches. At the same time he took my arm, and bore me toward the door.

"Come to the workshop, Kennedy," he said. "I've something else I want you to see."

"Are we not invited?" demanded Ingram.

"Later on," Holland replied, stopping at the door to wag a finger at him. "You know, you haven't got the scientific mind. I'll fetch you as soon as I know there's enough to see to keep you from yawning."

The laboratory was separated from the drawing-room by the full length of the house and two flights of stairs as well. When we entered it was in darkness, except for an eerie greenish glow, that reminded me at once of the cat's eye.

Holland bent over a small table crowded with instruments, from the midst of which the weird green light proceeded. Every now and then came the vicious crackle of a high-tension spark, apparently from a Tesla coil, and livid lights showed on a rectangular screen that stood in front of the table.

"Well, what's your idea about the discovery?" said Holland quizzically.

"She's marvelous," I replied. "But if you think you are going to marry her and go right back to bury yourself in this den, you've got the surprise of your life coming."

Holland laughed.

"Oh, you mean Dallas Willard! I'm not the first research worker to take a chance at matrimony, by any means."

"Perhaps, but homely wasn't the word for the women they married. Miss Willard, now, isn't the sort a man can leave alone to amuse herself with good works."

"Well, it will do me no harm to take a rest," he said, with a sigh. "I've been spending altogether too much time in this place lately. But I wasn't thinking about that. Can't you guess what the discovery is?"

That screen and the ghostly green light brought back a memory, and I hazarded the opinion that the thing was concerned with the X rays.

"Only incidentally," he replied. "I couldn't make any ordinary electric lamp give a light in exact proportion to the current passed through it, so I went to work on the cathode rays instead. There are fifteen of my adapted Crookes tubes in that lamp, and if I alter the current a million times in a second they will give a million graduations of light on the fluorescent screen in front. Say, what would you think if I told you I could see along a wire?"

I had an exclamation of incredulity.

"Well, you'll see along a wire for

yourself in a moment," he rejoined. "It's primitive as yet, but it's as good as finished. I assure you I shall be able to see through brick walls, through mountains, if necessary. Distance will make no difference. All I want is a telegraph wire."

"Well, a good many people have got near to it," I said. "There was that Austrian fellow, you remember, who promised to enable us to see the man at the other end of the telephone wire when we took down the receiver to answer a call. Nothing has been heard from him since."

"He tried to do it with selenium," Holland replied, with a note of sympathy in his voice. "I wasted six months on that tack. You see, selenium passes an electric current according to the strength of the light you shine on it, all right. But it isn't quite quick enough for this business. When you shut off the light the selenium takes a fraction of a second to think before it will shut off the current."

"Then you have really got something new?" I asked.

"I've found an alloy," he replied proudly, "that's as much quicker than selenium as lightning is quicker than sight. That's the green stuff in the cat's eye downstairs."

All the time he was working away at some intricate adjustment or other, and suddenly he snapped in a switch.

"Watch that screen," he said.

The screen was a pallid square of some material resembling celluloid, and as he spoke it became vividly illuminated, formless lights and shadows chasing each other across it with bewildering rapidity.

"You'll be the first man who has ever seen along a wire," Holland went on. "It was only to-day that I got the thing properly coupled up with the cat's eye transmitter. Of course, I established the principle long ago."

He bent again over some delicate adjustment of screws behind the screen, and almost at once the formless shadows resolved themselves into coherence. I was able to distinguish first the pic-

tures on the walls of the drawing-room. A moment later the furniture outlined itself. Finally the patterns on the rugs came into clear definition. But here and there on the picture were strange blurs that traveled across it, dissolving and reappearing in a puzzling manner. I drew Holland's attention to these.

"The people downstairs are walking about just now," he said, coming to the front of the screen to watch. "As soon as they sit down you'll see them as clearly as you can see the furniture. There, you see my uncle has taken Miss Holland's aunt into the conservatory. He won't be happy until she has admired his bougainvilleas. And those patches wandering about in the center, like disembodied spirits, are Dallas and young Ingram. I haven't managed to speed the thing up sufficiently yet to catch any but the slowest movements. If they would only stand still for a moment you could almost count their eyelashes."

He went back to work on his intricate whirling machinery.

"Of course, it will come," he said. "It's only a question of accelerating the movements. You saw the mirrors in that cat's eye? They revolve so rapidly that they reflect every point in the view onto the selenium alloy in a fraction of a second, and the selenium alloy causes corresponding variations in the current traveling along the wire up here. That current controls the cathode rays from the lamp, and there you are."

At that moment Miss Willard and Ingram came into view on the screen. They were standing under the electrolier, talking. As he had said, it was almost possible to count their eyelashes. Miss Willard's fine, well-knit figure and young Ingram's characteristic pose of the drawing-room idler were perfectly reproduced. While they remained at rest they were as clear as a photograph. But before Holland could get around to the front of the screen the picture had disappeared, dissolving again into formless lights and shadows as instantly as it came.

"We've fallen out of step with the cat's eye," he said. "Shout when it

comes up again, so I'll know when I hit the pace."

I pulled up a chair, and sat down in the green glow of the Crookes tubes to watch the flickering screen. In the ghostly shadows of the laboratory Holland moved like a wizard among his charms.

"This thing will make you famous," I said, and saw him smile his whimsical smile.

"That's the way with research," he answered. "You bury yourself for years, and get no reward, and at last you cease to look for any. And then, you know, suddenly everything comes to you at once. It's apt to be—intoxicating."

He fell to whistling softly, and I heard him scraping the end of a wire with his pocketknife.

"About that marriage idea," he went on abruptly. "There's no reason why it should interrupt things, after all. We're going to take a house up the river, and I'm to have a big new laboratory right on the premises."

"Big enough for afternoon tea receptions?" I queried skeptically.

The words were no sooner spoken than the picture of the drawing-room sprang into being once more, and I gripped the arms of my chair hard in the effort to repress an exclamation of astonishment. For in the center of the screen, brightly lit by the drawing-room electrolier, were the figures of Dallas Willard and Maynard Ingram—and they were locked in each other's arms, and I saw him bend his head to kiss her!

"Can you see anything yet?" asked Holland cheerfully.

I had a struggle to control my voice before I could lie naturally.

"Not a thing," I said.

Perhaps it was a mistake, but in that instant I had decided that he should not see what I had seen. Most women will give away another woman, or another woman's sweetheart, with something like enthusiasm. But a man's first instinct is to conceal such things.

"Strange!" exclaimed Holland. "I've pushed the regulator clear around. I

hope there's no breakdown in the drawing-room. That wouldn't be put right very quickly. It's the most delicate part of the whole business."

He struck a match, and went over each electrical connection in turn, finally throwing the match down, stamping on it, and straightening up with a grunt.

"Let's see how it looks," he said. "Perhaps—"

But before he could reach the front of the screen I stretched forward a hand to the mass of wires running into the brass terminal sockets on the edge of the table, seized one at random, and jerked it sharply out of connection. At once the picture vanished, the lamp went out, the crackling sparks ceased, and the siren note of the wildly spinning lead shields died gradually down.

Holland swore at me through the black darkness in utter astonishment, but I was too much dismayed to reply. I had intended only to throw the machine out of gear. It never occurred to me that a single wire controlled so much of it.

"What on earth made you do that?"

Holland grumbled, and I heard him groping on the floor for the lost wire.

"Oh, quit it, and let's go downstairs,"

I said. "You've done enough for one evening. The others will be getting restive."

Extending my right hand at a venture, I succeeded in covering the terminal socket from which I had pulled the wire, and gripped it tensely. After all, I calculated, it was only necessary to prevent him from restoring the connection for a moment or two, and I felt that it was worth doing when I had already gone so far.

"Look here, Kennedy!" came Holland's voice out of the darkness, speaking slowly and distinctly with a note of anger. "You can't fool me that way. What was it you saw on that screen just now?"

I gripped the terminal more tightly as I became aware of his hand feeling for it along the edge of the table.

"Nothing, I tell you. Turn on a light and let's go downstairs."

"Downstairs be canned! I'm going to see for myself."

"Go ahead, then," I said, forcing a laugh. "Try your strength!"

I knew he couldn't tear my grip away from that terminal without choking me, and I didn't think he would do that. The next moment I felt his touch traveling lightly down the sleeve of my left arm to the hand. Before I could withdraw it, there was a startling flash of electricity, and a burning shock ran through me that racked every joint, bowed my spine, and threw me forward onto the floor in a heap. He had touched my hand with the live wire, and of course my other hand, being on the terminal, made me part of the electric circuit.

When I gathered my scattered senses and sat up the ghostly green glow once more illuminated the room, and the siren note of the spinning leaden shields was gathering head.

"You madman!" I spluttered. "You might have electrocuted me."

He laughed quite coolly at my indignation.

"It's improbable, with this precise voltage," he said. "A few thousands more or less, though, would have left you stiff enough. You really shouldn't fool with high-tension terminals. Why, what the——"

He stopped with a gasp, for once more the picture appeared on the screen. Dallas Willard and Ingram were still there in the bright illumination of the electrolier, and they had not moved. His black coat sleeve was sharply outlined against her waist, and her forehead rested on his shoulder.

I struggled to my feet and made Holland shut off the hateful vision.

"It's indecent," I said angrily. "It's nothing but electrical keyhole work to spy on one's guests in that way."

We stood there for a minute staring at each other, with no sound but the busy buzzing of the Tesla coils, and faint musical note of racing machinery. Holland's face had looked ghastly in that light from the first, and I suppose mine had appeared the same to him.

The green glow had something of the effect of those advertising mercury lamps in the power it had to make a live man look like a purple corpse. But now Holland's face seemed to wither as well, until I was honestly afraid for him.

Those who have passed through moments of real tragedy know that it is only in stories that such moments find dramatic expression. In real life people are too busy suffering to be very dramatic. Holland merely thrust his hands deep into his pockets, and sat down very deliberately.

"Well!" he said at last, in a quiet voice. "This is a sudden sideways finish to it. But it's perhaps as well—I might never have known."

There didn't appear to be any answer to this. It certainly was sufficiently ironic to have his success in one direction so cruelly destroy his happiness in another. Try as I would, I could think of no word of consolation.

"The question is," he went on, "what's to be done about it? Will you eternally despise me because I don't go down there at once and manhandle young Ingram? I suppose any other man with the spirit of a cur would throw him into the street. But somehow I don't feel resentment against anybody."

"Of course you don't," I agreed. "As a scientist, you know that in the prosecution of their love affairs people do precisely as they must. Anyway, it would be absurd melodrama."

"I've got to end the engagement somehow," he continued.

"Nonsense!" I exclaimed. "You can't do it. Only a woman can break an engagement."

"Then what's to be done?" he repeated, with the persistence of a sick man. "Do I have to tell her what we saw? I don't know how to do it."

"I'll tell you," I said, after a moment's thought. "I'll bring them down here, and let them see for themselves what the machine can do. I'll make it clear that we have been able to see them pretty nearly all the time. You don't have to say a word. The next move

will be up to the girl, then. Perhaps it will work out all right in the end."

"Right!" snapped Holland. "How can it be right? You can't make right out of wrong. The whole thing is hideously wrong!"

So I left him alone. There was nothing more to be said, at least nothing that there was any use in saying. I went downstairs slowly, passing the elder Holland and Miss Willard's aunt in the conservatory. The old gentleman, I observed, was earnestly discussing the culture of bougainvilleas.

I was at some pains to make my approach to the drawing-room distinctly audible. When I entered Miss Willard was sitting at one end of the settee, and Ingram at the other. He greeted me with a querulous assumption of boredom.

"We began to fear that Holland had succeeded in asphyxiating the pair of you," said Ingram. "When are we to be shown something amusing?"

I replied with what geniality I could muster that I was unable to say, but promised them something quite astonishing if they would come to the laboratory.

Miss Willard rose at once, and as I held the portière curtain aside for her I couldn't refrain from a sneaking sympathy for young Ingram. It wasn't a fair test for a boy. She was a living, breathing challenge.

In the hall we passed the old people again, still arguing about plants, and I had an idea.

"Holland wants your help in a little experiment," I told them, "if you don't mind occupying the small settee under the electrolier in the drawing-room for ten minutes."

"What? Has he got that cat's eye to work at last?" asked the old man, with sudden interest. "Very well, we'll be the victims."

He bore off Miss Willard's towering aunt at once, and the rest of us went up to the laboratory, where the girl exclaimed a little at the ghastly light. As for Holland, he did not even glance up from his instruments, and his face was set in grim lines. He had occupied the

interval in tuning up the motion, so that the picture of the drawing-room came up immediately. Ingram and the girl exhibited lively astonishment, but though I watched them, their self-control was admirable.

"It is the cat's eye!" said Miss Willard. "Isn't he a dear, marvelous, old Merlin?"

Her cool duplicity took my breath away, and Holland said nothing, either. He toiled away to keep the thing in tune, and Ingram stood in front, watching. The girl's animated face assumed a weird, unearthly beauty in that flickering light. Her hair appeared blood-red, and her eyes slate-colored, and the faultless pallor of her skin was intensified. I saw her gazing at Holland instead of at the screen, her lips parted in a kind of affectionate awe. I think that for a moment I hated her for not being more the sort of woman a scientist should want for a wife.

"What are those smudges that move across it?" asked Ingram suddenly. "They look like spirit photographs."

"You'll see when they sit down," I answered.

I guessed that he was going to receive a jolt, and I didn't want to lighten it by advance explanations. He seemed to have the idea that he was looking at a mere lantern slide of the drawing-room, instead of watching the actual thing itself over the wire.

I never dreamed, however, that Holland and I were going to be jolted still more severely. When at last the figures of the elder Holland and Miss Willard's large aunt came into view I had to grope about for a place to sit down.

Of course, it was preposterous. It was grotesque! But there on the settee was Miss Willard's massive aunt, upright as ever and graciously smiling, and seated in her capacious lap was Holland's diminutive, woman-hating uncle. I could see by his gestures and the expression of his face that he was eloquently elaborating a new theory concerning bougainvilleas!

There was a sharp exclamation from young Ingram.



"Oh, you see it, do you!" muttered Holland savagely.

Then from Miss Willard came a low, rippling contralto laugh that gradually rose until it got beyond control. Ingram and myself, joining in, swelled it into a long, loud chorus of cachinnation, altogether shameless and unchokable, that drowned the noise of spinning machinery.

"Are you all crazy?" cried Holland, darting round to the front of the screen. For a moment he stared blankly, running a hand through his hair. The gravity of the faces on the screen, their earnest, polite discussion in that unthinkable propinquity, proved finally irresistible. Holland himself had to laugh, though a trifle weakly.

"Look, man, at those etchings on the wall behind the settee," I said at last, gripping his shoulder and pointing in my excitement. "Why didn't we notice that they appear to be only six inches apart? You know better than I do that there's really over two feet of wall space between them."

"And therefore," he said, "there is in reality almost that distance between those two on the settee!"

"And therefore," I repeated joyfully, "your cat-eyed camera is a confounded cross-eyed liar! Can't you see, man, that the infernal thing *squints*?"

He stared from me to the screen, and from the screen to Dallas Willard, who was leaning against a marble slab, and dabbing at her eyes with an absurdly flimsy handkerchief. The picture had gradually faded away, but she still laughed reminiscently when she could find enough breath.

"Those mirrors," protested Holland, "were adjusted to a hair's breadth when I fixed that camera to-day, and they haven't been touched since. I can't see how they could possibly have become displaced."

"There is the culprit!" I interrupted,

pointing at the girl. "Miss Willard poked her finger into the cat's eye before you brought me up here."

He stood ruffling his hair dubiously. The others were still gasping a little at intervals, as if reluctant to relinquish the memory of the picture. Finally Holland took me aside with energy and decision.

"Go downstairs to that cat-eyed thing," he said, "and poke your foot into it. Thank Heaven, they haven't caught on! And, if you're a friend of mine, you'll take young Ingram with you."

So I went, dragging Ingram—he was too weak to resist, anyway—and we left Holland and his fiancée there in the ghostly green-lit laboratory.

Of course Miss Willard's aunt wanted to know what they were doing.

"I imagine," I told her, "that they are correcting a defect in the cat-eyed camera."

"How pleasant it will be for him," said Miss Willard's aunt, "to find that she can assist him in his work!"

Whew! That red-haired, violet-eyed beauty to help any man to keep his nose on the grindstone! But for her he would infallibly have perfected the cat's eye, instead of dropping it like a hot coal because it lied about her. But as I said before, you can never be quite sure of these things. Personally I would have believed anything of a woman with Dallas Willard's coloring, just to be on the safe side.

She is still wickedly handsome, though she has a nicely stepped line of smaller Hollands now, with whimsical grins and an embarrassing taste for chemical research. And to this day, Professor Holland, in spite of the necessity of adding to his alphabetical adornment from time to time, is always markedly averse to leaving her alone for very long.





# PLAYS AND PLAYERS

## A FIRST NIGHTER

**T**HE theatrical season, which opened in the last heat of August, brought one success potent enough to overcome the inertia of the dog days. This is "The Merry Countess," the Strauss waltz-operetta, "Fledermaus," which the Shuberts offer at the Casino. Under the title of "The Night Birds," this piece was done out of town last year.

All merry patrons of the merry song play remember the thrill of "The Chocolate Soldier," when that rare combine of plot and character and golden melody was suddenly put forth in the desert of years—a desert of years it had been, indeed, since a "musical comedy" had possessed either true mirth or pure music. Precisely the same excitement is quivering New York at this hour. "The Merry Countess" is comedy, it is a story, it is music, and in the great moments of its second act, it has such dancing as sets the lyrical poets to raving.

For this delight of swift-darting, graceful, winglike movement the "jaded theatergoer" gives his thanks rapturously to Martin Brown and the Dolly Sisters, and forgets that so foreign a word as "blase" ever leaked into his vocabulary.

The present production of "The Merry Countess" has another merit in common with "The Chocolate Soldier"—alas that it should be such a rare

merit! It is almost perfectly cast. Rarer still, it is really staged; not merely mounted and costumed, but staged. The story is worked out, to the eye, through consistent detail in both ensemble and individual "business." Needless to say it is directed by one from abroad, the man who put it on in London. Staging of this sort is not even a lost art in America; it has never been discovered.

The story tells how a Hungarian countess with a roving spouse and an amorous cousin used the latter to teach the former the charms of his own fire-side. She was impetuous in her methods, not to say daring. She "tipped off" certain information to the governmental authorities which induced them to raid *Prince Orloff's* palace, where the roulette wheels waltzed, as all things movable waltz in Vienna. Her husband, his physician, and the governor of the prison are among those collected by the police, and dragged away in a crescendo waltz chorus. This coup persuades the merry count that "even the best little woman in the world will bear watching."

Forrest Huff, the chocolate soldier of other seasons, is the husband of the *Merry Countess*, and he plays this rôle, as he did the other, with a neat sense of comedy. It is a fatuous comedy, and deftly done. The Hungarian cousin, whose most temperamental attentions to the countess help to precipitate the scan-

dal at the prince's gambling palace, is embodied with artistry by Maurice Farkoa, who brings to the rôle a manner which is the very height of light opera.

José Collins is the magnetic daughter of Lottie Collins, who sang "Ta-ra-raboom-de-ay" in the 'alls to the delight of our English uncles. She is as un-Saxon as her baptismal appellation, and possesses a vivacious charm and a mellow color that are profounder than Latinity. She might indeed be the Hungarian she plays with so much verve. Added to her personality and her dramatic ability—or, rather, prior to these—is her voice. It is a brilliant dramatic soprano, rather light, but warm and sympathetic and admirably schooled. Further, as a singer, Miss Collins earns our undying gratitude by her diction. Wonder of wonders, she is willing to disclose what the song is all about. She is not only willing, she does it.

Martin Brown and two Magyar maidens, who have simplified their spelling for America into the "Dolly Sisters," supply the dance and its joy. There is no other American dancer to whom Martin Brown can be compared. Neither is he in the antipodal class of the Russian, Mordkin, or of the Italian, Molasso, who are both as opposite from each other as from Martin Brown. Yet he has one quality in common with both Mordkin and Molasso; his dancing is not extraneous gyrations and gymnastics, it is the expression of his personality.

It hardly remains to be said that Martin Brown has scored a sensational success. His is an emphatic personal hit in a production that is almost all "hits." In these days of messy dancing, his success reflects credit upon the public as well as upon him.

Something of this same clean and fair gayety in the dancing of Moya Mannerling and Alan Mudie explains why this duo made the only flutter in "The Girl from Montmartre," which opened "the season" so mildly at the Criterion, with Richard Carle and Hattie Williams in the limelight. Miss Williams' sparkling

teeth and eyes never proclaimed greater good humor, and Richard Carle never labored harder with poorer material. Why should an honest comedian, as Carle is, be condemned to hard labor as an accessory after the fact in the sins of the librettists? 'Tis the Smith Brothers, and they have done their Smithiest.

A pleasant event in itself was the opening of the new Brady Theater on Forty-eighth Street; a pretty little house of the "intimate" style, though not such a closet for family secrets as Mr. Ames' Little Theater. The new Forty-eighth Street Theater—a sufficiently unimaginative and unattractive name—is to be devoted to farce, so say the press reports. We hardly expect it to be so devoted to "Just Like John" that it cannot relinquish that gentleman's image. George Broadhurst has given our theater its best farces, but it did not give Mr. Brady's theater his best, and we hope not *its* best. Mark Swan assisted in the compilation of "Just Like John." During the scorch of the opening night, a capable cast worked like trusty firemen to save whatever of life might be in the structure.

The first drama to appear is "The Master of the House," adapted by Edgar James from the German. A. H. Woods produced this play last season in Chicago with a cast headed by Julius Steger, who staged the present New York production, Florence Reed, Eva Randolph, and that intelligent actress, Amelia Gardner. The piece failed, none of the expert opinionists agreeing as to the cause. Miss Reed made a flashing success in the rôle of *Bettina*, the minx who lures the white-haired husband and father from home. The rôle is so suited to her personality, her quality of voice, and habitual movements and gestures, that it is no wonder she loves the part, nor that in order to play it again she forsook the far subtler, finer rôle of *Ilona*, in "Typhoon," which she played in Mr. Walker Whiteside's support. Miss Reed's personal performance, transplanted to "The Master of the House," will probably

sweep the town like wildfire, at least that portion of the town which admires this type; because, as *Bettina*, it is not only brilliantly arrogant, but right.

One might occupy thirty pages of this good fiction space with the managerial forecasts but for the probability that at least nine hundred of the productions announced will never be made. Concerning a few, however, we can speak authoritatively. There is Billie Burke, at the Lyceum, in "The Mind-the-Paint Girl"; John Drew, at the Empire, in Sutro's "The Perplexed Husband," a trifle of a comedy in which he has the support of Mary Boland, rare and beautiful Alice John, Nina Seavening, Emily Watson, and Hubert Druce, the last three being Charles Frohman's latest "immigrants," and without special reason. David Belasco will present "The Governor's Lady," by Alice Bradley, and "The Case of Becky," by E. Locke, with Frances Starr as the dual Rebecca. The cast of "Becky" consists of eight electricians and five players.

In this age, when the Oldest Critic sighs for "the palmy days," and says "there were actors then," and can see nothing but noisy mediocrity in the theater since the commercial manager took hold, and when the commercial manager has turned snob, and imports London players for all the big rôles, thus further crippling American dramatic art, it is inspiring to note the achievement of Walker Whiteside, our most American actor as well as our best. This season Mr. Whiteside will again present the Hungarian drama "Typhoon," by Menyhert Lengyel, playing it briefly in New York, and then in the principal cities of America. The play is gripping in its fascination; it is a play people return to see repeatedly. But even the play, magnetic as it is, becomes secondary to the individual performance of Whiteside as *Tokeramo*, the young Japanese diplomat, who is the central character of the drama. This is art which shines like the Kohinoor in our theater's crown, paling the surrounding jewels from London and elsewhere. There has been nothing with which to compare it since Mansfield created

*Baron Checvrial*, and Whiteside's *Tokeramo* is in the opinion of this writer a greater work than Mansfield's *Checvrial*, first, because the emotional range of the part is greater, secondly because of a truly tender, however reserved, poetic quality and a spiritual touch, which are distinguishing attributes of Mr. Whiteside's genius. These qualities, through the medium of a masterly technique, turned Zangwill's ponderous preachment, "The Melting Pot," into a vital human experience. With the vivid dramatic material of "Typhoon" they have created a mighty and memorable portrait, immortal in the minds of those who have witnessed it.

The Yellow Peril threatens us. Mr. Whiteside's success, both sensational and solid, has tempted others. George Tyler, of Liebler & Co., will produce Pierre Loti's Chinese spectacle drama, "The Daughter of Heaven," at the Century Theater. For weeks secret hints of sensational announcements to come kept us goggle-eyed. Who was to play *Empress Ming*? This was to be a thunderclap when it was let loose among us. Some premature critics hinted at Duse. But be the press agent never so secret, murder will out; and Viola Allen is discovered. She is the *Daughter of Heaven*.

Next comes W. A. Brady with another French-Chinese confection, called "Turandot," in which Grace George will play the lead. William Harris, junior, and Edgar Selwyn will produce a Chinese novelty play by George Hazelton and Harry Benrimo, called "The Yellow Jacket." This play will be done in the Chinese manner which will differentiate it from the other Mongolian dramas on Broadway. Charles Frohman will produce a Japanese drama from the French, entitled "For the Honor of Japan." At this rate it may be just as well to get a positive statement from our three presidential candidates as to how they stand in the matter of Chinese exclusion.

"Milestones," by Arnold Bennett and Edward Knoblauch, is to open soon under Klaw & Erlanger's management. Two companies of "immigrants" will be

brought over entire to give the work in New York and Chicago. Of all the importations, perhaps the most interesting in advance is Granville Barker's company, perhaps headed by his wife, Lilah M'Carthy; which will present a number of Mr. Barker's plays, among them being "Prunella; or, In a Dutch Garden," the same being the most idyllically lovely trifle of elusive comedy and pathos that 'twas ever our lot to read. Winthrop Ames and the Shuberts jointly will present "Fanny's First Play," by George Bernard Shaw, at the Little Theater, with not all of the company now playing it in London.

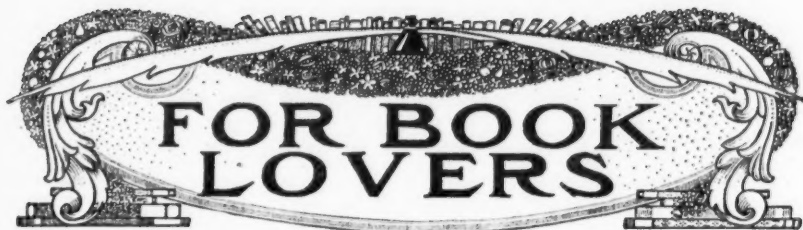
Miss Annie Russell will open the new Princess Theater in November, with nine weeks of old English comedies; a charming program, say we.

The Shubert announcements for the season sound full of promise. On the list is the "Five Frankfurters," to be done here under the name of "The Golden Lane." This is said, by those who have seen it abroad, to be a drama of unusual interest, dealing with both money and the Hebraic theme in a new and trenchant manner. Other plays will be "Love and Hate," by Louis Lehar—a cousin of the "Merry Widow"; "The Children," by Hermann Bahr; "The

Hawk," by Gustav Esman; "The Dirigible Airship," and "A Thousand Kronen," by Engle and Horst. From the French there will be an American version of "Les Petites," by Lucien Nepety, which has been running at the Theatre Antoine, Paris. Three American plays are included in the list: "Birthright," by Constance Skinner; "The Cinch," a farce by Edgar Franklin and Matthew White, and Lucille La Verne's dramatization of Will Harben's novel, "Ann Boyd." Half a dozen musical comedies complete the menu.

Laurette Taylor will be seen in a comedy by Hartley Manners, called "Peg o' My Heart," which had a ten weeks' run at the Burbank Theater, Los Angeles, this summer. Margaret Anglin is to do "Egypt," a Romany play by Edward Sheldon. Mrs. Fiske will appear in a Sheldon play, which she is now rehearsing. Helen Ware will appear in "The Trial Marriage." John Mason passes to Frohman management in "The Attack," by Bernstein. Augustus Thomas' play, "The Model," which was rather coldly received in Chicago last season, is opening in New York as we print. In another month we shall be better able to separate the true prophecies from the false.





## FOR BOOK LOVERS

**M**RS. WILSON WOODROW has just published, through D. Appleton & Co., "The Black Pearl," which the publishers call "a passionate love story."

One of the features of this new novel is that it heralds the return of Mrs. Nitschkan, the burly mountain gypsy, who took by storm the hearts and imaginations of the readers of "The New Missioner." It is the same Mrs. Nitschkan that reappears in the pages of "The Black Pearl"—bluff, fearless, original, philosophic, rejoicing in masculine occupations and sports, contemptuous of feminine restrictions, a good friend, and a single-minded enemy.

It is not her story, however, but that of Pearl Gallito. Two characters differing from each other so radically as these two it would be difficult to conceive. "The Black Pearl" is temperamental and subtle. Her acts and words betray the artistic nature more thoroughly than any description could do. In her dealings with Hanson, the vaudeville manager, Bob Flick, Mrs. Nitschkan, and Saint Harry, she shows a mixture of moods, passions, and ideals that emphasizes her unique personality and gives the story its special quality.

Though the setting of the story is in the West, in the neighborhood of the Salton Sea, it is not a Western tale of the familiar type. The action might almost have taken place anywhere; but the environment of the desert and the mountains lends its color, and furnishes the symbolism which gives the plot its atmosphere.

The story of this Western dancer is

an absorbing one, full of the sort of action that is constantly developing dramatic situations. It is primarily a love story—a passionate love story, as the publishers say—but the plot embodies other elements just as interesting. Bob Flick is a gambler who recalls Jack Hamlin; and Coop-eared José is a genial bandit who recalls nobody but himself. Pearl's friendship for them, and their devotion to her, and their adventures together, as well as Saint Harry's aloofness and Hanson's impudent audacity, supply the materials for an extremely well-told novel.

It is written in Mrs. Woodrow's best vein, and altogether surpasses anything she has hitherto done.



The author of "The Street Called Straight," recently published by Harper & Bros., unquestionably has a method of his own. He approaches his task judicially, with a certain legal squint, so to speak—propounding to his readers a hypothetical question of a sentimental nature, which he proceeds to analyze exhaustively. Then, for the benefit of those who have breathlessly followed his elucidations, he devotes the balance of the tale to the presentation of every possible delicate and difficult situation which could grow out of the given circumstances.

In "The Street Called Straight," the problem is this: Given a beautiful, well-born, wealthy young American woman, engaged to a young Englishman of the best type, with a traditional code of honor in good working order, what will be his attitude when he dis-



covers that his fiancée's father is an embezzler on the eve of discovery and imprisonment, and that the affair is further complicated by the fact that an American man, noble, if crude, who has long loved the daughter, has sacrificed his whole fortune to save the father? What will be the daughter's attitude? What the father's? What the American's? And finally what is the most comprehensive and satisfactory solution of the whole matter?

It must be admitted that the author takes his hurdles consummately; every phase of every situation secures his conscientious attention; the interplay of motive and international viewpoints is admirable; and his understanding of the art of suspense is so masterly that it effectively conceals his weakness of characterization. He always uses types, appearing to be quite lacking in that more intimate realization of character which makes a writer's book people live and breathe.

However, his many readers seem to bear witness to the fact that the great public would almost as lief have its novels worked out by geometry as by inspiration.



It is doubtful if "The Permanent Uncle," by Douglas Goldring, published by E. P. Dutton & Co., would ever have been written had it not been for the influence of Locke, not to mention that of various French authors of a lighter vein.

This book lacks the professional touch; it is immature in thought and in method. Even among the books of the hour, it is a lightweight, and yet it has a certain gay irresponsibility, and an attractive freshness which carry it. Its crudity is that of youth.

The story begins with an exposition of the incompatibilities of two young married people. Tim and Mary apparently have everything in life to make them happy, but are quite determined to be miserable. After an especially violent quarrel, they separate, and Mary starts off on a tour of the Continent with a merry and philosophic old wom-

an whom she calls Aunt Betty. Tim likewise, uneasy and distressed, becomes a wanderer, and in the course of his travels picks up an amiable old man, to whom he gives the title of permanent uncle, and with him a most unconventional young woman, who has run away from home, and who passes under the name of Joanna.

Ultimately, of course, the entire group meets. Further misunderstandings arise between Tim and Mary, until at last all difficulties are happily solved by an engaging young man who marries Joanna.



Baroness Von Hutten does not rely upon ingenuity of construction, nor yet upon originality of plot, for her success as a writer. Her real ability lies in characterization, and the power to bring persons and scenes vividly before the reader.

In "Sharrow," just published by D. Appleton & Co., there are many chapters before the real plot, with its few and feebly dramatic moments, begins to develop; and yet one is so deeply interested in the presentation of the various characters that he continues to read.

Sharrow is a wonderful old estate full of historic memories and relics. The story is built about its owner, Lord Sharrow, the events of whose life, from his earliest childhood, are given in detail. He is depicted as a strong, rather unpleasant character, and differs only from the usual hero of the lady novelist in being hopelessly ugly. He suffers a series of disappointments in his earlier affairs of the heart, and in consequence determines never to marry, looking to his brother to perpetuate their family.

The brother, marrying a Spanish pianiste, is killed in the hunting field before any children are born, and the complications arising from this episode furnish the plot, which is literally grafted on the last third of the story.



The middle course, so much commended, still remains an unknown path

to the muse of Elinor Glyn; she can only be frankly shocking or respectably dull.

"Halcyone," her latest book, published by D. Appleton & Co., belongs to the latter class.

Halcyone la Sarthe is the name of the heroine, a youthful English paragon with a nice appreciation of the classics. She grows up through a great many pages, but is finally sufficiently advanced in growth and emotion to meet John Derringham. John is an M. P., who is beset by an overmastering ambition to betroth himself to a beautiful and wealthy, but vulgar, woman—an American divorcee.

What remains of the story is confined to the various partings between John and Halcyone. These occasions are provocative of little besides rhetoric—of a sort.

"John," says Halcyone, "go back and do that which, being a gentleman, entails upon you, and leave the rest to God." An awkward way of casting a sentence, which one would not have expected from a young woman familiar with the classics.

"Halcyone," he said, while his proud eyes again filled with tears, "you have the absolute worship of my being. Go, my darling. I will do as you wish, and try to make myself worthy of your noble soul."

But these resounding phrases were unnecessary. John is the victim of an accident, and the vulgar woman, seeing

in it the termination of his career, ruthlessly throws him over, leaving him free to wed Halcyone.

If only Mrs. Glyn would restrict her capricious muse solely to the primrose path of dalliance, and once more let it shock at will, it would be a boon to the unoffending reader, who dreads nothing so much as being bored.



### Important New Books.

"The Sin of Angels," Martha G. D. Bianchi, Duffield & Co.

"Mary Pechell," Mrs. Belloc Lowndes, Charles Scribner's Sons.

"The Revenues of the Wicked," Walter Raymond, E. P. Dutton & Co.

"The Gate of Horn," Beulah Marie Dix, Doubleday, Page & Co.

"The Last Resort," F. Prevost Battersby, John Lane Co.

"Martha-by-the-Day," Julie M. Lippman, Henry Holt & Co.

"The Armchair at the Inn," F. Hopkinson Smith, Charles Scribner's Sons.

"Mrs. Lancelot," Maurice Hewlett, Century Co.

"The Heather Moon," Alfred Ollivant, Doubleday, Page & Co.

"The Secret of the Clan," Alice Brown, Macmillan Co.

"The Blackberry Pickers," Evelyn St. Leger, G. P. Putnam's Sons.

"Making a Business Woman," Anne S. Monroe, Henry Holt & Co.

"The Reef," Edith Wharton, D. Appleton & Co.

"The Street of Two Friends," F. Berkeley Smith, Doubleday, Page & Co.

"The Drifting Diamond," Lincoln Colcord, Macmillan Co.



## Talks With Ainslee's Readers

BY the time this number of AINSLEE'S reaches you the country will be on the verge of ruin or salvation, according to your political persuasions; great universities will be preparing for the final football battles that are to decide for young America which institution offers the greatest educational advantages; the new winter fashions from Paris will be eliciting exclamations of ecstasy or sniffs of disapproval, according to whether they are better adapted to your figure or the figure—if figure it can be called—of Mrs. B.

And yet we make bold to hope that even in these exciting times this number of AINSLEE'S, without the aid of tariff articles, football analyses, or dress patterns, will find its usual welcome. We would feel sorry to think that such delightful bits of written entertainment as Anne Warwick's novelette, the second story in May Futrelle's brilliant series, and Marie Conway Oemler's "Millinery and Mules" were to be lost in a tangled maze of ballots, touchdowns, and waist measurements.

A FEATURE of the December AINSLEE'S will be a story by Jeffery Farnol, set in the period of "The Broad Highway," and possessing much the same color, charm, and vivid characterization that made for the book its phenomenal success. As AINSLEE'S was, so far as we can learn, the first magazine in this country to print Mr. Farnol's work, it is a happy coincidence that the title of this story in our coming issue should be "The Return." We have been interested in turning back to "A Man and a Boy," which we printed four years ago. It is a pleasant little tale, worthy of a place in any magazine of entertainment, but by comparing it to this coming story we see that Mr. Farnol has traveled as far along his own particular road as the most adventuresome of his heroes have along theirs.

FOR the complete novel in December, Eleanor Mercein Kelly has written an extraordinary romance called "Toyo the Unlike." The tale itself, as well as its fascinating heroine, is certainly "unlike."

Anne Warwick, author of this month's novelette, contributes to the coming number a sprightly little tale, "Too Much of a Gentleman," in which the hero, to his wife's surprise and complete satisfaction, turns out to be only just enough of a gentleman, after all.

Other short stories sure to afford entertainment are "As You Dream," a modern romance with love and sword play, by Frank K. M. Rehn, junior; "Mr. Misogynist, Junior," by I. A. R. Wylie, who wrote "The Paupers of Portman Square"; "The Child," another of the problem stories of married life with which Constance Skinner attracted so much attention in AINSLEE'S a year ago; "The Clown and the Clergyman," by Thomas Addison, in which the author returns to the style of "St. Anthony's Vision" and "Sally Bunn"; "The Man with the Cowl," a detective story, by F. Berkeley Smith, that won't be detected as a detective story until the reader least expects it; "The Streak," another powerful tale of the Philippines, by Nalbro Bartley, and "The Day They Met," a joyous little patch of golden sunshine that Judith Dudley has captured and put on paper for us.

AS you know, we believe in series of stories. If a man whom you know marries a girl whom you know it is of more interest to you, though less unusual, than if a total stranger were to marry half a dozen women you had never heard of.

Haven't you, at some time or another, heard a man at his newspaper exclaim with sudden interest: "For Heaven's sake! Listen to this. 'John B. Brown, president of the——'" and then trail off disappointedly with, "Oh, it isn't *our* John Brown, after all."

Meeting the same characters in one story after another, you gradually get to know them; they become your friends. And, in consequence, their adventures and joys and sorrows become of far greater interest to you than those of strangers you are meeting for the first time. They become *your* John Browns.

"Esposito" in this number will be followed by two more Horace Fish stories set in the village of Terassa and dealing with the gentle old Spanish padre and his little flock. The second of the series, "Simpatica," possesses the same delicate charm, the same exquisite workmanship that characterize the first story. A more expressive title might be "The Lady with the Little Green Birds."

In the same number Anna Alice Chapin begins a new series to be called "The Woman with a Past." The central character, Pippa Carpenter, is a still beautiful woman to whom life has been both a lover and an enemy.

"Out of the thousand pieces which had been made of her enthusiasms," writes Miss Chapin, "she had kept an incurable interest in her fellow creatures. She could not ever remember that she was not in a measure her brother's and sister's keeper. Pippa was not a good woman, as the good people consider goodness, but she had in her the divine unrest which is sympathy, and which must trouble any but the most tender angels when they look from paradise into hell. Pippa,

being—well, emphatically not in paradise herself, had an even livelier feeling for such as walk in darkness."

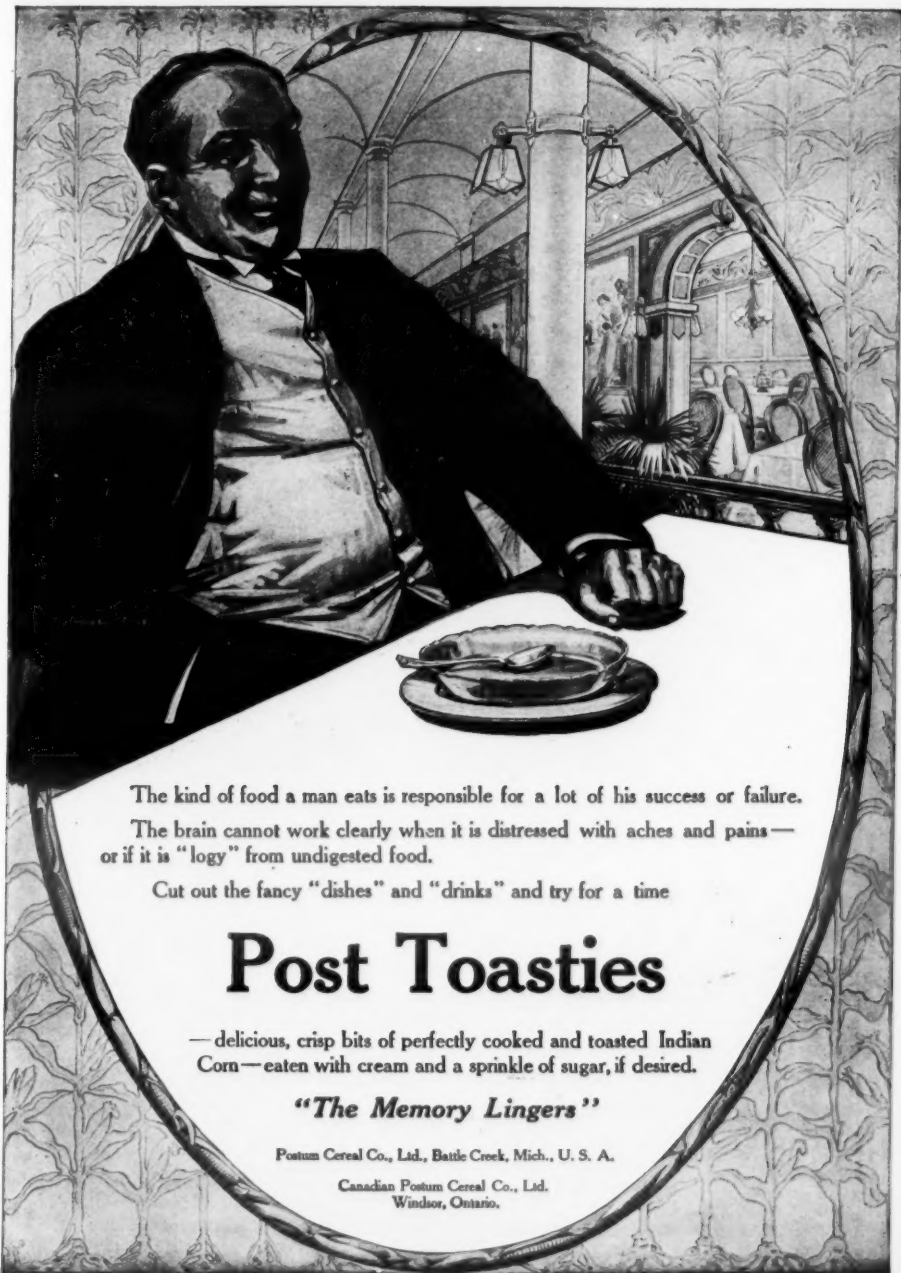
The opening story of this series is called "The Ghost Makers."



TAKEN as a whole, we are well satisfied with the December AINSLEE'S. We think you will find in it much of the sparkle and exhilarating crispness of December itself.

This will not be, as you probably have gathered from these hints of its contents, our Christmas number. In the mad scramble to get there before the other fellow our American publications are celebrating Christmas all the way from the first of November up through the middle of December. When Santa Claus finally arrives, he finds nothing to read but back numbers. If the race for precedence keeps on it will not be many years before a magazine will have difficulty in deciding whether it really is early for that year's Christmas, or a trifle late for the one before. That is not "playing the game"; half the joy of Christmas is lost to those who open their presents ahead of time. We are going to turn over a new leaf. Hereafter you won't be able to see what AINSLEE'S has for you until—well, beginning with this year Santa Claus will at least find AINSLEE'S still on the stands—if he hurries.





The kind of food a man eats is responsible for a lot of his success or failure.  
The brain cannot work clearly when it is distressed with aches and pains —  
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Cut out the fancy "dishes" and "drinks" and try for a time

## Post Toasties

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Corn — eaten with cream and a sprinkle of sugar, if desired.

***"The Memory Lingers"***

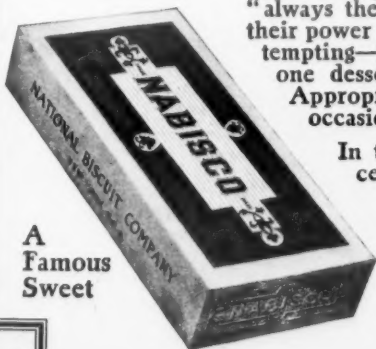
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and  
Joan**

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Always the same to  
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**Mallory Line** To Texas, all points Southwest and Pacific Coast. Exhilarating water route trip to Galveston, Key West, Tampa, St. Petersburg and Mobile. Only route New York to Texas without change. From Pier 45, North River, New York.

**Porto Rico Line** You will enjoy this wonderful trip to the "Island of Enchantment." A big swift steamer leaves New York every Saturday for San Juan direct. Send for booklet and information about sailings, rates, etc. General Offices: 11 Broadway, New York.

**Ward Line** Luxurious twin-screw steamships to Bahamas (Nassau), Havana and Isle of Pines, Cuba, Mexico and Yucatan, with rail connections to all important interior cities. Write for booklets. General Offices: Pier 14, East River, New York.

### DISTRICT PASSENGER OFFICES:

NEW YORK	PHILADELPHIA
290 Broadway	701 Chestnut St.
BOSTON—192 Washington St.	
CHICAGO	
444 Commercial	
Nat'l Bank Building	





### PIPEOLOGY

Away back, somewhere, this fellow's great-granddad discovered the corn-cob jimmy pipe. He cut a fat-cob in half and dug out the soft, dry centre. Then he bored a hole at the side close to the bottom, jammed in a short reed stem—and went to it!

Prince Albert hits the palate just as bully fine in the lowly corn-cob as in the costliest meerschaum. It isn't the pipe that makes the real smoke, gentlemen, it's the tobacco!

**Yes, sir, you can shake  
P. A. out of the bushes!**

Shake it right out of the littlest store farthest back in the wilds—anywhere, everywhere, because Prince Albert is *universal* in its popularity—*universally* liked by men who *know* what a pipe smoke should be; hence, sold *universally* throughout America!

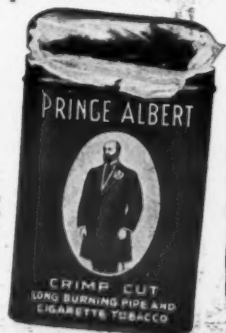
Here's the idea: No matter where you are you don't have to go short on your favorite brand for an hour! That's some fine thing when you get chummy with a jimmy pipe tuned up with the *one* tobacco that won't, *that can't*, bite your tongue, because the bite's cut out by a patented process. Get that?—Just you say to Mr. Dealer: "S'more

**PRINCE ALBERT**  
the national joy smoke"

Start shaking the bushes while the sun's out!

R. J. REYNOLDS TOBACCO CO., Winston-Salem, N. C.

5c in the toppy  
red bags; 10c  
tidy red tins;  
pound and half-  
pound humidor.



Please mention this magazine when answering advertisements.

## WHITE TOWN CARS

Built Particularly For Women

THE White Forty Coupe is the pioneer woman's gasoline car. To the woman who drives, it offers the touring radius and flexible speed of the gasoline roadster, combined with the comfort, safety, and ease of operation of the electric brougham.

The left-side drive admits of easy access to the driving wheel from the curb. The White Electrical Starter, positive under all conditions, not only is operated by one simple motion from the seat, but also renders impossible the inconvenience of the engine being accidentally stalled. The lighting of the car, electric throughout, is likewise controlled from the driving seat.

The first of its kind, the White Coupe is the recognition of woman's demand for a clean, safe motor carriage for town and suburban use, having the grace, speed, and radius of travel which only a gasoline car can give. White Coupes are built in Thirty, Forty, and Sixty horsepower models.

The White  Company  
CLEVELAND

Manufacturers of  
Gasoline Motor Cars,  
Trucks and Taxicabs.



Please mention this magazine when answering advertisements.

REPRODUCTION (REDUCED) FROM  
PICTURE MADE WITH A \$12.00  
BROWNIE CAMERA AND A FIFTY CENT  
KODAK PORTRAIT ATTACHMENT.  
ORDINARY WINDOW LIGHTING.  
KODAK FILM, KODAK TANK DEVELOP-  
MENT, VELOX PRINT.



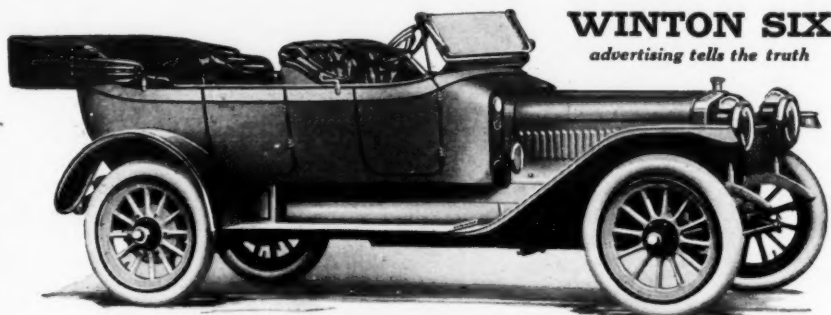
## At Home with a Kodak

Make the most of the home side of photography. Let your Kodak, by daylight and flashlight, keep for you that intimate home story which to you will always be fascinating. Such pictures can by no means supplant the more formal studio portraits—but *they can delightfully supplement them*, and make your whole collection more interesting to you and to your friends.

"AT HOME WITH THE KODAK," our beautifully illustrated and instructive little book on home picture making, free for the asking, at your dealers, or by mail.

EASTMAN KODAK COMPANY, ROCHESTER, N. Y., *The Kodak City.*

Please mention this magazine when answering advertisements.



## WINTON SIX

*advertising tells the truth*

# Making the Right Thing Right

These are six-cylinder times. Everybody knows it.

A few years ago, only one manufacturer in the world had the foresight to see six-cylinder times ahead and the courage to hasten their coming. That was Alexander Winton.

### ***Pioneering the Six***

In June, 1907, Mr. Winton became the world's first maker of sixes exclusively. He was on the right road. The six-cylinder times of today prove it.

More than that, he made the right thing *right*. That also is proved.

Because the Winton Six that was first marketed in June, 1907, is being marketed today, just as he made it then, without a single radical change in any important part of its construction.

The body lines and seating arrangements are new this year. But the car itself, as originally designed and produced, was so far *ahead-of-the-times* that it has set a new world's record for *freedom from faults*.

### ***Leading the Sixes***

The Winton Six is *up-to-the-minute* in everything that makes a high-grade car worth having, and it is the best proved six in the world.

Sixth consecutive year of success without requiring a single important change.

Always a self-cranking car—the first self-cranking car on the market.

Continuous holder of the world's lowest repair expense record.

The car that converted the industry from fours to Sixes.

And—

The car that costs you the least money for "overhead" charges. Because we are free from watered stock, funded debt, and other burdensome overhead, we are able to put into the Winton Six all the quality any car can have and sell it to you at a price that stops competition—\$3000.

The greatest value in the world.

Shall we send our latest catalog?

**THE WINTON MOTOR CAR CO.,** 122 Berea Road  
CLEVELAND, O.

Winton Company Branch Houses in New York, Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Detroit, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Kansas City, San Francisco and Seattle





Reform  
Corsets

## *Distinction in Dress*

In dress there is one of two notes to strike—individuality or a strict adherence to the fashions of the day. Both require correct figure lines and careful corset selection.

### *The Corset Makes the Figure*

Assuming that your aim is to be corsetted for either the fashions of the day or your individual taste in dress—a Redfern is your model—soft, light and pliant—yielding to every demand of the wearer.

The contour of the season's figure gives the effect of the natural waist—which simulates both the Grecian and the Oriental—with long lines and a slightly curved but closely confined hip.

### *The Standard of Corset Fashion*

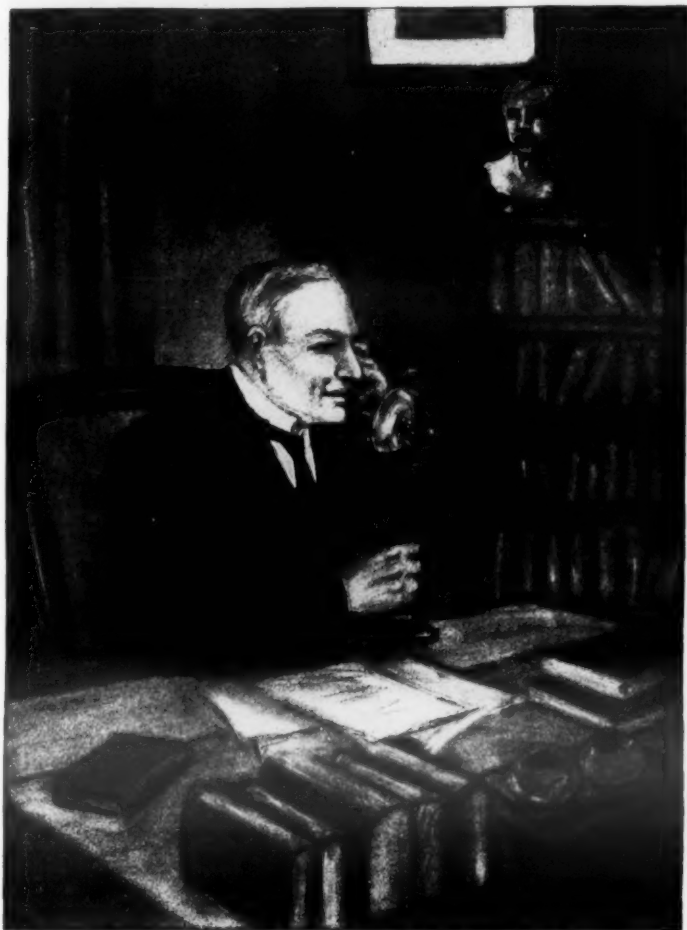
is the Redfern, exquisitely dainty and in keeping with the most fastidious dress.

There is a Redfern especially designed for every type of form, and wherever a Redfern is sold it is fitted by an expert corsetiere, who will select your particular model and adapt it to your figure.

*Found at all High-class Stores.*

**\$3.50 to \$15.00 Per Pair.**

THE WARNER BROTHERS COMPANY  
NEW YORK      CHICAGO      SAN FRANCISCO



### His Hearing Has Been Restored

"Yes, it is I who am speaking." "I can clearly hear every word you say." "No, I am not deaf any more but I used to be as deaf as a haddock." "Yes, I can hear as well as you can now." "I never expected such relief as this: it is a real pleasure to be able to use the telephone under normal conditions." "Of course, I am positive the cure is complete: there's no doubt about it." "Last Sunday I heard the sermon and singing without any straining, and all this week I've been praying to people that my deafness is gone." "Dr.

Contant did it for me in six weeks after everything else failed, without drugging me, without sticking any electrical devices in my ears and without any loss of time. He has a common-sense, self-treatment method that is devised according to Nature's laws. He explains it in a treatise which he will send gratis and postpaid by addressing George E. Contant, M. D., 497 A, Station E, New York City." Legions of testimonials proving remarkable benefit—both sexes, all ages—often after many years of deafness and head-noises.

# FEMININE LOVELINESS of Skin and Hair



## Enhanced by CUTICURA SOAP

Used daily, assisted by occasional gentle applications of Cuticura Ointment.

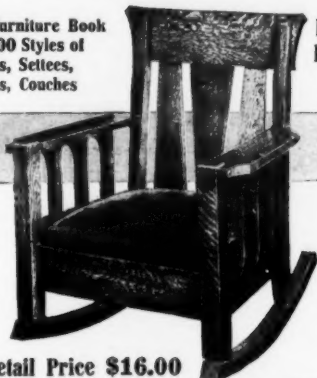


Cuticura Soap and Ointment are sold everywhere. For sample of each, with 32-p. book, free, address "Cuticura," Dept. 133, Boston.

### TENDER-FACED MEN

Should shave with Cuticura Soap Shaving Stick, 20c. Makes shaving a pleasure instead of a torture. Liberal sample free.

See Furniture Book  
for 100 Styles of  
Chairs, Settees,  
Tables, Couches



Brooks  
Rockers  
No. 10

Retail Price \$16.00

**Our Factory Price \$7.50**

for this beautifully designed MASTER-BUILT rocker—made of finest quarter-sawed oak, Marokene leather cushion. Height, 35 inches; width, 21 inches; depth, 21 inches. Completed and finished in color you choose. Then shipped in sections—assembly in a few minutes with a screw driver. Any one can do it easily. Pocket the dealer's profit of from 25% to 75% and have furniture that will last a lifetime.

**FURNITURE BOOK FREE** showing 100 MASTER-BUILT designed pieces; furniture for every room in the house. 64 pages filled with illustrations. Get this book and our offer—write today.

**BROOKS MFG. COMPANY, 4411 Rust Ave., Saginaw, Michigan**

**Every Piece  
GUARANTEED**

## White Valley GEMS

Substitutes  
for Diamonds



### Send for FREE Catalog!

showing wonderful White Valley Gems in Rings (Ladies' or Gentlemen's), Scarf Pins, Studs, Brooches, Necklaces, Cuff Buttons, Lockets, Earrings—100 different articles and styles.

Not glass, not paste, not any kind of imitation, but **beautiful, splendid gems.** (White Sapphires chemically produced.)

Look like finest diamonds. Will scratch file, and cut glass. Stand acid test. Famous society women substitute White Valley Gems for real diamonds—or wear the two together confidently.

It is **solid gold** mountings. 21-year Guaranty Certificate with each gem. Ring measure sent with catalog. Will send any article in book & Co. D.—express prepaid—subject to examination—or by registered mail on receipt of price. Money refunded if not satisfactory.

**WHITE VALLEY GEM CO.**  
506 Saks Bldg. Indianapolis, Ind.

Please mention this magazine when answering advertisements.

## A Silver Lining

**N**OT every cloud has a silver lining, but the threatening cloud that overshadows the family upon the accidental death or disability of the bread winner who has had the foresight to secure an accident policy in The TRAVELERS has a silver lining.

Among the 570,000 people who have received benefits under our accident policies, many have written us, "In the hour of our trouble what would we have done without the help of the insurance money from The Travelers."

Their cloud had a silver lining.

No man with a family can afford to leave them unprotected in case of his death by accident.

No man who depends upon his earnings can afford to be without insurance himself in case of accidental disability.

Do you carry accident insurance? Do you carry enough?

Let us tell you about the kind sold by The TRAVELERS, the greatest accident company in the world.

The Travelers Insurance Co., Hartford, Conn.

Please send particulars regarding Accident Insurance. My name, address and date of birth are written below.

Ainslie's—Form 10

## The Woman Worth While Holds the Admiration

of Husband, Friend, Brother or Sweet-heart. She is sound in body and mind; is efficient, well poised, with

**Perfect Health**  
and a

**Good Figure**  
(well carried)

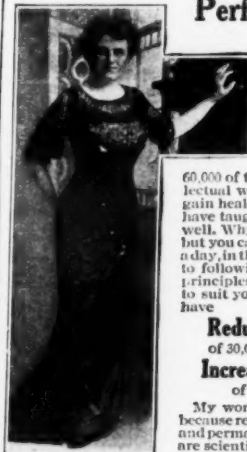
She makes the most of herself.

I have helped

60,000 of the most refined, intellectual women of America to regain health and good figures and have taught them how to keep well. Why not you? You are busy, but you can devote a few minutes a day, in the privacy of your room, to following scientific, hygienic principles of health, prescribed to suit your particular needs. I have

**Reduced the Weight**  
of 30,000 women and have  
**Increased the Weight**  
of as many more.

My work has grown in favor because results are quick, natural and permanent, and because they are scientific and appeal to common sense.



## No Drugs — No Medicines

You can—

**Be Well** so that everyone with whom you come in contact is permeated with your strong spirit, your wholesome personality—feels better in body and mind for your very presence.

**Be Attractive**—well groomed. You can—

**Improve Your Figure**—in other words beat your best.

I want to help you to realize that your health lies almost entirely in your own hands, and that you can reach your ideal in figure and poise.

Judge what I can do for you by what I have done for others. I have relieved such Chronic Ailments as

Indigestion  
Constipation  
Anæmia  
Sleeplessness  
Nervousness

Torpid Liver  
Catarrh  
Headaches  
Weaknesses  
Rheumatism

The best physicians are my friends—their wives and daughters are my pupils—the medical magazines advertise my work.

I have published a free booklet showing how to stand and walk correctly and giving other information of vital interest to women. Write for it and I will also tell you about my work. If you are perfectly well and your figure is just what you wish, you may be able to help a dear friend—at least you will help me by your interest in this great movement for greater culture, refinement and beauty in woman.

Sit down and write me NOW. Don't wait—you may forget it. I have had a wonderful experience and I should like to tell you about it.

**Susanna Cocroft**

Dept. 34 624 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago

Miss Cocroft is a college bred woman. She is the recognized authority upon the scientific care of the health and figure of woman.

# CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING SECTION

Rate, \$1.00 a line, or \$2.61½ a line, which includes POPULAR and SMITH'S Magazines, making a total of 4,000,000 readers—the cheapest and best Classified Advertising medium on the market. Next issue of AINSLEE'S closes Oct. 29th.

## Agents & Help Wanted

**FREE ILLUSTRATED BOOK** tells about over 300,000 protected positions in U. S. service. More than 40,000 vacancies every year. There is a big chance here for you, sure and generous pay, lifetime employment. Easy to get. Just ask for booklet A 22. No obligation. Earl Hopkins, Washington, D. C.

**GOVERNMENT Post Office Examinations** everywhere soon. Get prepared by former U. S. Civil Service Examiner. Write today for free booklet. Patterson Civil Service School, Box Y, Rochester, N. Y.

**AGENTS WANTED** in every county to sell the Transparent Handle Pocket Knife. Big commission paid. From \$75 to \$300 a month can be made. Write for terms. Novelty Cutlery Co., No. 13 Bar St., Canton, Ohio.

A large well known company about to spend \$100,000 on a tremendous advertising campaign, requires the services of a bright man or woman in each town and city. The work is easy, pleasant and highly respectable and no previous experience is necessary. We will pay a good salary and offer an unusual opportunity for advancement, to the person who can furnish good references. In addition to this salary, we offer a Maxwell Automobile, a Ford Automobile and over \$3000 in prizes to the representatives doing the best work up to December 31. In your letter give age and references. Address, Ira B. Robinson, Advertising Manager, 277 Medford St., Boston, Mass.

**AGENTS** Wanted for guaranteed "Vulcan" Fountain and Stylographic Pens. Small investments, big returns. Sell at sight. Write for catalog and large discount. J. Ulrich & Co., 603 Thames Bldg., New York.

**AGENTS** — Handkerchiefs, Dress Goods. Carlton made \$8,000 one afternoon. Mrs. Bosworth \$25,000 in two days. Free Samples. Credit. Stamp brings particulars. Freeport Mfg. Company, 45 Main St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

**AGENTS**, male and female can make big money selling my great number of imported specialties listed in my big illustrated catalogue. Contains many rare and exceptional money makers. Send for it to-day. Joseph Gluck, 621 Broadway, New York City.

**BIG MONEY WRITING SONGS.** Hundreds of dollars have been made by successful writers. We pay 50 per cent of profits if successful. Send us your original Poems, Songs or Melodies today, or write for Free Particulars. Dugdale Co., Dept. 256, Washington, D. C.

## Agents and Help Wanted—Continued.

**LEARN HOW** to easily make money without interfering with your present occupation. Address at once, Desk 26, Scribner's Magazine, 155 Fifth Avenue, New York.

**AGENTS MAKE BIG MONEY** and become sales managers for our goods. Fast office sellers. Fine profits. Particulars and sample free. One Dip Pen Company, Dept. 9, Baltimore, Md.

**AGENTS.** Portraits 35c, Frames 15c, sheet pictures 1c, stereoscopes 25c, views 1c. 30 days' credit. Samples & Catalog Free. Consolidated Portrait, Dept. 1146, 1027 W. Adams St., Chicago.

**AGENTS** earn from \$3.00 to \$9.00 a day selling Scientifically Tempered Knives and Razors with photo handles. We show you how to make money. Write today for special outfit offer. Canton Cutlery Co., Dept. 210, Canton, O.

**AGENTS**—Something New—Fastest Sellers and Quickest Repeater on earth. Permanent profitable business. Good for \$50 to \$75 a week. Write for particulars. American Products Co., 6149 Sycamore St., Cincinnati, O.

**BUMPER CROPS HARVESTED.** GET YOUR SHARE of the avalanche of gold by handling our attractive assortments of Toilet Soaps and Toilet Articles. Daily necessities and sure money getters. Everybody "falls" for them. Others making \$5 to \$10 daily, so can you. Our new Xmas specialties are gorgeous at small cost and big profits. Great Crew Managers' proposition. We manufacture; you save middlemen's profit. Act quick. Harvest of profits now at its height. Davis Soap Co., 200 Davis Building, Chicago.

**BRIGHT, AMBITIOUS WOMAN.** Age 25 to 50, in every town to introduce our brand new woman's specialty. 332 percent profit. \$10 weekly easily made spare time. \$25 to \$50 full time. Send 25 cents for full size \$1.00 sample and complete particulars. Quarter back if you don't accept position. Shaw-Wood Co., Dept. 89 A, Syracuse, N. Y.

**AGENTS**—Either sex, sell our guaranteed hosiery. Whole or part time. 70 per cent profit. Goods replaced free if hole appears. Experience unnecessary. Quaker Knit, 26 So. 31st Street, Philadelphia, Pa.

**MONEY** By Mail—Start mail order business, or manage an agency for me; printed matter furnished for half profits; write for particulars. Hazen A. Horton, Desk 620, Tekonsha, Mich.

## Music

**BIG MONEY WRITING SONGS.** Hundreds of dollars have been made by writers of successful words or music. Past experience unnecessary. Send us your song poems, with or without music, or write for free particulars. Acceptance guaranteed if available, by largest publishers in Washington—only place to secure copyright. H. Kirkus Dugdale Co., Dept. 741, Washington, D. C.

**FOR 10c.** I'll send 7 assorted copies of music (full size and complete) and catalogs. Music arranged, printed and published. Frank Harding (Established 1860), 228 E. 22d St., New York

**SONG WRITERS**—Don't be satisfied with royalty propositions. By our original and practical plan you are in a position to realize all profits. Booklet A tells how. Universal Music Pub. Co., Washington, D. C.

**SONG POEMS WANTED**—Big money writing songs. Fast experience unnecessary. Send us poems or music. Illus. Book free. Hayworth Music Pub. Co., 613 G, Wash., D. C.

## Patents and Lawyers

**PATENTS SECURED OR FEE** returned. Send sketch for free report as to patentability. Guide Book and What to Invent, with valuable List of Inventions Wanted, sent free. One Million Dollars offered for one invention. Patents secured by us advertised free in World's Progress, sample free. Victor J. Evans & Co., Washington, D. C.

**IDEAS WANTED**—Manufacturers are writing for patents procured through me. 3 books with list 200 inventions wanted sent free. Advice free. I get patent or no fee. R. B. Owen, 39 Owen Building, Washington, D. C.

**PATENTS THAT PROTECT** AND PAY. Advice and books free. Highest referee fees. Best results. Promptness assured. Send sketch or model for free search. Watson E. Coleman, Patent Lawyer, 624 F Street, Washington, D. C.

**PATENT** your ideas. \$9,000 Offered for Certain Inventions. Book "How to Obtain a Patent" and "What to Invent." Sent free. Send rough sketch for free report as to patentability. Patents obtained or fee returned. We advertise your patent for sale at our expense. Established 16 years. Address Chandlee & Chandlee, Patent Attys., 976 F St., Washington, D. C.

**PATENTS THAT PAY BEST.** Inventions Bought by Capital. Write for free book. R. S. & A. B. Lacey, Dept. 62, Washington, D. C.

Please mention this magazine when answering advertisements.



D201. 1 ct. Dia. Com. Price \$10.00  
D202. 1/2 ct. Dia. Com. Price \$6.00  
D203. 1/2 ct. Dia. Com. Price \$6.00  
D204. 1/2 ct. Dia. Complete, \$1.75  
D205. 1/2 ct. Dia. Complete, \$93.00  
D206. 3/4 ct. Dia. Complete, \$33.50

**\$9750 GENUINE Perfect Cut DIAMONDS \$9750**  
PER CARAT

**Direct From Importer At A Saving of 40%**  
Diamond! You can own and wear them! Give them for Christmas! Think of it, genuine perfect cut Diamonds, pure and brilliant, only \$97.50 per Carat! And Solid Gold Mountings, thousands of styles, at manufacturing cost! This BASCH Plan, established 34 years, wipes out every loss and expense—offers you bed-rock lowest prices—protects you with the

**WONDERFUL BASCH GUARANTEES**  
A legal contract to buy back every diamond for 90% in Cash; quality, value and carat weight legally certified; full price guaranteed in exchange any time. You see and approve BASCH Diamonds before you purchase. Any diamond sent for your inspection care nearest express office or bank, without deposit, references or cost to you. No obligation to buy! No risk! No advance payment!

**Send No Money!** FREE 100 page, new BASCH Diamond Book, illustrations from 1,000,000 stock. Don't pay exorbitant prices, don't even think of buying a diamond until you have seen this magnificent Book. **Free!** Write Now!

**L. BASCH & CO., Dept. W 346 S. State St., Chicago, Ill.**

Dept. W 346 S. State St. Chicago, Ill.



50th Aug., 1891. Send for lecture: "Great Subject of Fat."  
**No Dieting. No Hard Work.**  
**DR. JOHN WILSON GIBBS' TREATMENT FOR THE PERMANENT REDUCTION OF OBESITY**  
Harmless and Positive. **No Failure.** Your reduction is assured—reduced to stay. One month's treatment **\$5.00.** Mail or office, **1370 Broadway, New York.** A **PERMANENT REDUCTION GUARANTEED.**  
"Is positive and permanent."—N. Y. Herald, July 3, 1905.  
"On Obesity, Dr. Gibbs is the recognized authority."—N. Y. World, July 7, 1909.



Wear this beautiful, double gold finished, semi-cut, initial bracelet. Style this season. Send 25c. (coin or stamp) to enter advertisement, engraving, mailing. We also send catalogue of new jewelry. **Yves Moussé Paris Le Non Sanspareille**  
**INDIA COMPANY, 39 Y Maiden Lane N. Y.**

<p><b>CONGRESS</b> GOLD EDGED PLAYING CARDS AIR-CUSHION FINISH</p> <p>For Social Play Artistic Designs Rich Colors New Each Year Club Indexes</p> <p>50¢ PER PACK</p>	<p>THE OFFICIAL RULES OF CARD GAMES HOYLE UP-TO-DATE ISSUED YEARLY SENT FOR 15¢ IN STAMPS</p>	<p><b>BICYCLE</b> CLUB INDEXED PLAYING CARDS IVORY OR AIR-CUSHION FINISH</p> <p>Special Skill and Years of Experience Have Developed Their Matchless Playing Qualities For General Play</p> <p>25¢ PER PACK</p>
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**THE U.S. PLAYING CARD CO. CINCINNATI, U.S.A.**

**I TRUST YOU TEN DAYS. SEND NO MONEY.**  
**\$2 Hair Switch Sent on Approval.** Choice of Natural, wavy or straight hair. Send a lock of your hair, and I will send you a 22 inch short ones line human hair switch to match. If you find it a big triumph result \$2 in ten days, or sell it and get your switch FREE. Extra about a little more, fashion de postage. Free beauty book showing latest style of hair dressing—also high grade wigs, pompadours, slips, pads, etc. Women wanted to sell top hair goods.  
**ANNA AYERS, Dept. 4602, 22 Quincy St., Chicago**

**Rent 10 Months—Then It's Yours!**  
**This Great Visible Writer The Famous Oliver Model No. 3**  
Send your name and we will tell you about the greatest typewriter proposition in the world.  
**Typewriters Distributing Syndicate, 166 W. U. N. Michigan Blvd., Chicago**

## Games & Entertainment

**PLAYS,** Vaudeville Sketches, Monologues, Dialogues, Speakers, Minstrel Material, Jokes, Recitations, Tableaux, Drills, Entertainments, Make Up Goods. Large Catalog Free. **T. S. Denison & Co., Dept. 10, Chicago.**

## Coins

**OLD COINS** Bought and Sold.—Fall Coin Selling Catalogue just out—Free to Collectors Only. Buying Coin Catalogue 10 cents. **William Hesselein, Malley Building, New Haven, Conn.**

## Real Estate, Farms, Etc.

**BARTOW**—The best town, in the best county, in the best state, in the best country in the world. Center of citrus fruit culture and general farming. Write Board of Trade, Bartow, Florida.

**THE STANDARD OIL COMPANY'S** second Pacific Coast refinery is located at El Segundo, Cal. Many industries are being attracted on account of cheap fuel. It's growing fast. Large profits are being made in real estate. For full information address: **El Segundo Land & Improvement Co., 130 Tide Insurance Bldg., Los Angeles, Cal.**

## Miscellaneous

**ALL THE RAGE**—Royal Hawaiian Lei's, worn at luncheas, dinners and dances. Price \$1.00 postage paid. Inter-Island Curio Company, P. O. Box No. 404, Honolulu, T. H.

London, Paris, Berlin, Venice and Monte Carlo Hotel suit-case labels. Decorate your suit-case and command respect. 2 for 25c.; 5 for 50c. **E. Crosthwait, Columbia Falls, Mont.**

**HEALTH**—Are you looking for a climate and treatment suitable for that trouble of yours for the winter months? Address **Dr. McClaune Ambulatory Inst., Box 26M, Ocala, Fla.**

## Go Now and End That Corn

We have told you how a hundred times. *Go now and do it.*



(246)

While you have puttered with your corns, sixty million corns have been removed by Blue-jay.

While you pare and pare, others end their corns.

Get some Blue-jay plasters. Apply one to a corn.

The pain will end instantly. Then the B & B wax—a scientific invention—will undermine the corn. In two days the corn comes out.

No pain, no soreness, no inconvenience. *And no more corn*, unless you cause a new corn to develop.

Go now and prove it. Then say farewell to corns.

A in the picture is the soft B & B wax. It loosens the corn.  
B protects the corn, stopping the pain at once.  
C wraps around the toe. It is narrowed to be comfortable.  
D is rubber adhesive to fasten the plaster on.

## Blue-jay Corn Plasters

Sold by Druggists—15c and 25c per package

Sample Mailed Free. Also Blue-jay Bunion Plasters.

Bauer & Black, Chicago and New York, Makers of Surgical Dressings, etc.

## Thermozine

### A FRENCH DISCOVERY DRY WAX POULTICE

**KILLS ALL GERM LIFE  
HEALS INFECTED WOUNDS  
ALLAYS INFLAMMATION  
SUPERFICIAL OR DEEP SEATED  
AN ABSOLUTELY SANITARY POULTICE  
USED IN THE FRENCH ARMY & NAVY  
QUARTER POUND CAN WITH ACCESSORIES  
SENT PREPAID ONE DOLLAR**

**PASTEUR CHEMICAL COMPANY  
98 BEEKMAN ST. ~ NEW YORK CITY**

## Brown Your Hair WITH WALNUT TINT HAIR STAIN



**Light Spots, Gray or Streaked  
Hair Quickly Stained to a  
Beautiful Brown.**

### Trial Bottle Sent Upon Request.

Nothing gives a woman the appearance of age more surely than gray, streaked or faded hair. Just a touch now and then with Mrs. Potter's Walnut-Tint Hair Stain and presto! Youth has returned again.

No one would ever suspect that you stained your hair after you use this splendid preparation. It does not rub off as dyes do, and leaves the hair nice and fluffy, with a beautiful brown color.

It only takes you a few minutes once a month to apply Mrs. Potter's Walnut-Tint Hair Stain with your comb. Stains only the hair, is easily and quickly applied, and it is free from lead, sulphur, silver and all metallic compounds. Has no odor, no sediment, no grease. One bottle of Mrs. Potter's Walnut-Tint Hair Stain should last you a year. Sells for \$1.00 per bottle at first-class druggists. We guarantee satisfaction. Send your name and address, and enclose 25 cents (stamps or coin) and we will mail you, charges prepaid, a trial package, in plain, sealed wrapper, with valuable booklet on hair. Mrs. Potter's Hygienic Supply Co., 1728 Croton Bldg., Cincinnati, O.

## DON'T WEAR A TRUSS!



C. E. BROOKS, the Discoverer

Brooks' Appliance, the modern scientific invention, the wonderful new discovery that cures rupture will be sent on trial. No obnoxious springs or pads. Has automatic Air Cushions. Biads and draws the broken parts together as you would a broken limb. No salves. No lies. Durable, cheap. Pat. Sept. 10, '01. Sent on trial

to prove it. Catalogue and measure blanks mailed free. Send name and address today.  
C. E. BROOKS, 1046-A Brooks Bldg., Marshall, Mich.

## DIAMONDS ON CREDIT

SEND FOR FREE CATALOG  
CONTAINS 1800 BEAUTIFUL ILLUSTRATIONS  
WEAR WHILE PAYING  
WATCHES ♦ DIAMONDS ♦ JEWELRY  
WE PAY ALL CREDIT CHARGES

**BRILLIANT JEWELRY COMPANY**  
704 MARKET ST. 6TH FLOOR  
SAN FRANCISCO.

## Rémoh Gems

**Look and Wear  
Like  
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**A Marvelous  
Synthetic Gem**

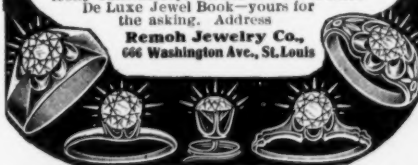
**Not Imitation**

—the greatest triumph of the electric furnace. Will cut glass—stands filing, fire and acid tests like a diamond—guaranteed to contain no glass. Rémoh Gems have no paste, foil or backing—their brilliancy is guaranteed forever. One-thirtieth the cost of a diamond. These remarkable gems are set only in 14 Karat Solid Gold Mountings.

**Sent On Approval Anywhere In U. S.**  
—your money cheerfully refunded if not perfectly satisfactory. Write for our 4-color

De Luxe Jewel Book—yours for the asking. Address

**Rémoh Jewelry Co.,**  
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**Prof. L. HUBERT'S  
MALVINA  
CREAM**  
"The One Reliable  
Beautifier"

Positively cures Freckles, Sunburn, Pimples, Ringworm and all imperfections of the skin and prevents wrinkles. Does not merely cover up but eradicates them. Malvina Lotion and Ichthyol Soap should be used in connection with Malvina Cream. At all druggists, or sent post paid on receipt of price. Cream, 50c., Lotion, 30c., Soap, 25c.

**Prof. L. HUBERT, Toledo, Ohio**

THE FAMILY APERIENT.

THE BEST

**"APENTA"**

NATURAL APERIENT WATER

BOTTLED AT THE SPRINGS, BUDA PEST, HUNGARY.

ANOTHER LONG COMPLETE NOVEL

BY

**B. M. BOWER**

## **"Flying U Ranch"**

A picturesque, colorful novel of the outdoor West. In it you'll find the same lovable, delightful characters that made "Chip of the Flying U," so popular. With their irresistible humor, quaint philosophy, and almost boyish attitude toward the world, these cowboys are people well worth knowing. It is a dollar-and-a-half-length novel, and is complete in the next issue of the Popular.

**The November Month-end Popular  
On sale October 23rd**

# Old Dutch Cleanser

Makes Scrubbing Easier

MANY USES AND FULL  
DIRECTIONS ON LARGE  
SIFTER - CAN - 10¢





640	\$25
641	\$50
642	\$75
643	\$100

The Best Gift of All.

## DIAMONDS-WATCHES ON CREDIT

Wonderful Bargains—Send for Catalog


This Diamond Ring, enlarged to show the handsome mounting, is our great special. Finest quality pure white Diamonds, perfect in cut and full of fiery brilliancy. Specially selected by our diamond experts, and skilfully mounted in our famous Loftis "Perfection" 6-prong ring mounting, 14k. Solid Gold. Cased in dark blue velvet ring box. The four rings here shown are the most popular, although we show all sizes and styles in our large Catalog.


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Do your Christmas shopping early. Send for this Free Christmas Catalog, telling all about our Easy Credit Plan, and make your Christmas selections now before the rush is on. Over 2000 illustrations of Diamonds, Watches, Jewelry, etc., at bargain prices. Select anything desired, have it sent to your home or express office, all charges prepaid. If entirely satisfactory, send us one-fifth of the purchase price and keep it, balance in eight equal monthly amounts. Bargains in Watches. Write for Catalog today.

LOFTIS BROS. & CO.

The Old Reliable Original Diamond and Watch Credit House  
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Branch Stores: Pittsburgh, Pa., and St. Louis, Mo.





### Discouraged About Your Complexion?

Cosmetics only make it worse and do not hide the pimples, freckles, black-heads or red spots on face or nose.

**Dr. James P. Campbell's Safe Arsenic Complexion Waters** will purify your blood, cleanse and beautify the skin, and give you a fresh and spotless complexion.

Use these absolutely safe and harmless waters for 30 days and then let your mirror praise the most wonderful beautifier of the complexion and figure known to the medical profession. Used by Beautiful Women for 27 years.

**\$1.00 per Box. (Full 30 day treatment.)**

We guarantee as freshly packed and of full strength, only when boxes have Blue Wrapper, bearing our printed guarantee. Sold at all reliable druggists or sent by mail prepaid in plain cover from

**RICHARD FINK CO., Dept. 55, 415 Broadway, New York City**

Send 10c. in stamps for sample box.



ANY STYLE

DIAMONDS

### Flash Like Genuine BARODA DIAMONDS.

at 1/40 the cost—IN SOLID GOLD RINGS

Stand acid test and expert examination. We guarantee them. See them first—then pay.

Special Offer—14k Tiffany ring 1 ct. \$5.99. Gentle ring 1 ct. \$9.99. 14k Stud 1 ct. \$6.50. Sent C. O. D. for inspection. Catalog FREE. Shows full lines. Patent ring gauge included. 10c. The Baroda Co., Dept. A-6. Lehigh and Dover St., Chicago

# LABLACHE

FACE POWDER

### AUTUMN GLORY


Triumphantly follows summer sunshine and Nature is at her best. LABLACHE triumphs over wind and sun. Discerning women everywhere appreciate its value in preparing for the social requirements of winter. Invisible, adherent, dependable.

**Refuse substitutes**

They may be dangerous. Flesh, White, Pink or Cream. Not a box of druggists or by mail. Over two million boxes sold annually. Send 10c. for a sample box.

**BEN. LEVY CO.,**  
French Perfumers, Department 40,  
125 Kingston Street, Boston, Mass.





## WURLITZER

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### Musical Instruments

282 Pages, 2561 Articles described, 788 Illustrations. 67 Color Plates. Every Musical Instrument. Superb Quality. Lowest Prices. Easy Payments. Mention instrument you are interested in. We supply the U. S. Government.

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"AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE is becoming more popular with every issue. It presents action of a most entertaining nature—the kind which appeals to discriminating readers."—Argus, Montpelier, Vt.



## CRESCA DELICACIES

They answer the question—what can I serve that is "different." Our descriptive color booklet "Cresca Foreign Luncheons," containing many novel menus and recipes sent for 2 cent stamp.

**CRESCA COMPANY, Importers, 361 Greenwich St., N.Y.**



# ELGIN WATCHES ON CREDIT

## SPECIAL THIS MONTH



P. S. HARRIS,  
Pres., Harris-Goar Co.

We want to send you this fine \$25.00 Thin Model Gents 17-Jewel Elgin, the one watch that has long been the Standard of the World, Complete with Beautiful Double Straps Gold Case, and fully GUARANTEED for 25 years, on **FREE TRIAL—\$16.50—only**

**\$2.00 A Month**

—and if you don't say this is the biggest Elgin Watch bargain you ever saw, send it back at our expense. If you wish to keep it, the way is easy. Pay us only \$2.00 and the rest in similar amounts each month. **No interest—no security**—just common honesty among men. We want you to see for yourself that this fine 17-Jewel Elgin is better than watches costing twice or three times as much.

**Send For Our Big Free Catalog**

our new FREE WATCH and DIAMOND BOOK, also our book called "Facts vs. Fumes" or all about the watch business both at home and abroad. Write for it today and get thoroughly posted.

**HARRIS-GOAR CO.,** [The House That Sells More Elgin Watches Than Any Other Firm in the World.] Dept. 598, Kansas City, Mo.



Guaranteed for 25 Years.

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USEFUL SUBJECTS 10c. EACH.

Sheldon's Letter Writer; Shirley's Lover's Guide; Woman's Secrets, or How to Be Beautiful; Guide to Etiquette; Physical Health Culture; Frank Merrill's Book of Physical Development; National Dream Book; Zingara Fortune Teller; The Art of Boxing and Self-defense; The Key to Hypnotism; U. S. Army Physical Exercises. Street & Smith, Publishers, 79-89 Seventh Ave., New York

## Salesman or Sales Manager

WHETHER you are a salesman or a sales-manager, a general manager, an officer or a director of your company, you should be represented by a good card—the best card

**Peerless Patent Book Form Card**



*Appearance of our most card in case*

That they are the best, admits of no discussion. The best men everywhere use them. If you don't it is only because you have not examined them. They are always carried together and they carry conviction. They are always smooth edged when you detach them, and they are always clean and flat. They leave nothing to be desired, however fastidious the taste, or severely critical the judgment. Send today for sample tab and detach the cards one by one—satisfy yourself as to what other university call best. Send today.

**The JOHN B. WIGGINS COMPANY,**  
Engravers, Die Embossers, Plate Printers  
66-68 East Adams Street, Chicago

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17 SPRUCE STREET, NEW YORK CITY



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and let me see what you can do with it. You can earn \$20.00 to \$125.00 or more per week, as illustrator or cartoonist. My practical system of personal individual lessons by mail will develop your talent. Fifteen years successful work for newspapers and magazines qualifies me to teach you. Send me your sketch of President Taft with 6c in stamps and I will send you a test lesson plate, also collection of drawings showing possibilities for you.

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February 15 to April 27, 1913

NEW CUNARDER "LACONIA," 18,200 Tons

71 Days, \$400 up, including hotels, guides, drives, shore excursions.

VISITING: Madeira, Spain, Algiers, Malta, Athens, Constantinople, 19 days in Palestine and Egypt, Rome, Riviera, etc. Stopover in Europe and return by swift S. S. "Mauretania" and "Lusitania". Send for program.

FRANK C. CLARK

Times Building

New York

**EDWARDS FIREPROOF STEEL**

**GARAGES**  
For Automobiles and Motorcycles

**\$30 to \$200**

Easy to put up. Portable. All sizes. Postal brings latest illustrated catalog.



THE EDWARDS MFG. CO., 201-251 Eggleston Ave., Cincinnati, O.

Please mention this magazine when answering advertisements.



**BLUE WHITE  
GENUINE  
DIAMONDS**  
MODERATE PRICES  
EASY  
TERMS

Get that Diamond  
for your wife, sweetheart  
or yourself now—at these start-  
ingly low prices—and pay for it in  
easy little amounts from time to time.

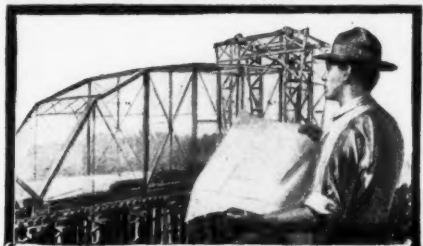
**Certified Guarantee with every Diamond**—guar-  
anteeing its weight and quality. A safe way to buy and save  
money—no inconvenience—and have the Diamond now.  
Perfectly cut blue white Diamonds, gleaming, sparkling,  
scintillating—genuine high quality. **Not a cent to pay**  
until you have examined the Diamond. We send you free  
magnifying glass. Any diamond in our

**Beautifully Illustrated Diamond and Watch Free Catalog**  
will be sent for examination without obligation. This offer is open to  
every honest person—OPEN TO YOU. Note the wonderful  
values shown here.—No. 105—3.8 carat; No. 106—5.8 kt.; No.  
107—1.4, 1.10 kt.; No. 108—1.4 kt.; No. 109—1.2 kt.; No.  
110—1.1 kt., each; No. 111—5.8, 1.10 kt. Compare these  
prices with others. Remember we give you CER-  
TIFIED GUARANTEE. We import the  
rough Diamonds, cut them here, save 25  
per cent duty. Give the saving to you.

Write today for our **250 CATALOG**  
and **SPECIAL WORLD-BEATING**  
**OFFER of 1 carat Diamonds for only**  
**\$100.** All Diamonds on easy terms—no  
money first. Send for Catalog today.

**The Walker Edmund Co.,**  
DIAMOND IMPORTERS  
Dept. V.  
205 S. State St.  
Chicago  
Illinois

109 \$65 \$30  
108 \$35  
105 \$40  
110 \$50  
106 \$35  
112 \$50



## This Man Bridged the Gap

His name is R. L. Thomas and he lives in Eureka, California. He enrolled for I. C. S. training in 1902 while working as ranch hand, and as assistant on a ferry-boat between times.

In 1908 he drew the plans and made the cost estimate for the handsome steel structure which now spans the river at the old time ferry crossing.

Thomas is now City Engineer of the City of Eureka, California. He says his income has increased seven-fold since enrolling.

This is but one of thousands of similar I. C. S. stories of success, and shows that the I. C. S. can help you win success at your chosen occupation.

To find out how the I. C. S. can help you, mark the attached coupon today. Doing so costs you nothing. You assume no obligation.

It doesn't matter who you are, what you do, or where you live, the I. C. S. can help you bridge the gap to success.

**Mark the Coupon NOW**

**That  
"Awful Smart"  
Your Shaving Soap Did It**

The free caustic found its way into the pores of your skin and that terrible smarting and drawing sensation resulted.

Use  
**MENNEN'S  
SHAVING CREAM**

which contains no free caustic, and enjoy a cool, comfortable shave.

Mennen's Shaving Cream makes a lather which requires no "rubbing in" to soften the beard. You lather and then you shave. Saves time, and does away with tender faces.

For sale everywhere 25c  
Sample Tube Free

**GERHARD MENNEN CO.**  
Newark, N. J.

**INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS**  
Box 1199 SCRANTON, PA.

Explain, without further obligation on my part, how I can qualify for the position before which I mark X.

Electrical Engineer	Civil Service
Elec. Lighting Supt.	Bookkeeping
Telephone Expert	Stenography & Typewriting
Architect	Window Trimming
Building Contractor	Show Card Writing
Architectural Draftsman	Lettering and Sign Painting
Structural Engineer	Advertising
Concrete Construction	Commercial Illustrating
Mechan. Engineer	Industrial Designing
Mechanical Draftsman	Commercial Law
Civil Engineer	Teacher
Wine Superintendent	English Branch
Stationary Engineer	Poultry Farming
Plumbing & Steam Fitting	Agriculture
Gas Engineer	Chemist
Automobile Running	Salesman
	Spanish
	French
	German

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Present Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Street and No. \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Please mention this magazine when answering advertisements.

# HARD TO TYPE

---

☞ It is difficult to type an advertisement of the December Ainslee's. Too many features. Our first impulse is to play up in big letters the name of

## JEFFERY FARNOL

☞ His story, "The Return," surely justifies this display. But what about the authors of equally attractive stories? What about such names as Eleanor Mercein Kelly, Anna Alice Chapin, Horace Fish, Anne Warwick, F. Berkeley Smith, Nalbro Bartley and I. A. R. Wylie?

☞ When you have read this splendid number of the "magazine that entertains," you will appreciate our problem.

---

## Ainslee's for December

On sale November 15th.

15 cents the copy



## A Proverb of Bell Service

Once upon a time there dwelt on the banks of the holy river Ganges a great sage, by name Vishnu-sarman.

When King Sudarsana appealed to the wise men to instruct his wayward sons, Vishnu-sarman undertook the task, teaching the princes by means of fables and proverbs.

Among his philosophical sayings was this:

*"To one whose foot is covered with a shoe, the earth appears all carpeted with leather."*

This parable of sixteen hundred years ago, which applied to walking, applies today to talking. It explains the necessity of one telephone system.

For one man to bring seven million persons together so that he could talk with whom he chose would be almost as difficult as to carpet the whole earth with leather. He would be hampered by the multitude. There would not be elbow room for anybody.

For one man to visit and talk with a comparatively small number of distant persons would be a tedious, discouraging and almost impossible task.

But with the Bell System providing Universal Service the old proverb may be changed to read:

*To one who has a Bell Telephone at his lips, the whole nation is within speaking distance.*

**AMERICAN TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANY  
AND ASSOCIATED COMPANIES**

***Every Bell Telephone is the Center of the System.***

Please mention this magazine when answering advertisements.



Trouble Bruin between the Remington Cubs.

*"There's often a quarrel over whose turn's next!"*

The graceful lines—the clean cut beauty of a Remington-UMC .22 Repeater—make you so eager to shoot it.

And it's as accurate as it is attractive.

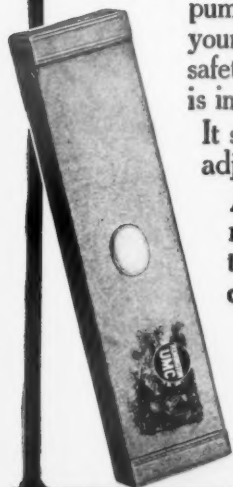
The Remington-UMC .22 Repeater is rifled, sighted and tested by the most expert gunsmiths in the world—has the famous pump action—takes down in a twinkling, your fingers are your only tools; cleans from the breech—and the simple safety device never fails to work, so accidental discharge is impossible.

It shoots short, long and long rifle cartridges without adjustment, mix them in the magazine as you will.

Ask your dealer to show you this elaborate Christmas package—a reproduction of the most expensive type of a pigskin gun case. It will tickle any man or boy.

Drop in as you pass to-day. The cost of many healthful holidays in the open—of pleasurable hours at target shooting the year around—is less than you think.

**Remington Arms-Union Metallic Cartridge Co.**  
299 Broadway, New York City



*Remington-UMC Eastern Factory loaded steel lined shells now for sale on the Pacific Coast.*

Please mention this magazine when answering advertisements.

# "Standard" GUARANTEED PLUMBING FIXTURES



**E**very day—in millions of homes, little children, as well as grown-ups, are being taught the joy of healthful living and bathing in cleanly, beautiful "Standard" bathrooms.

Genuine "Standard" fixtures for the Home and for Schools, Office Buildings, Public Institutions, etc., are identified by the Green and Gold Label, with the exception of one brand of baths bearing the Red and Black Label, which, while of the first quality of manufacture, have a slightly thinner enameling, and thus meet the re-

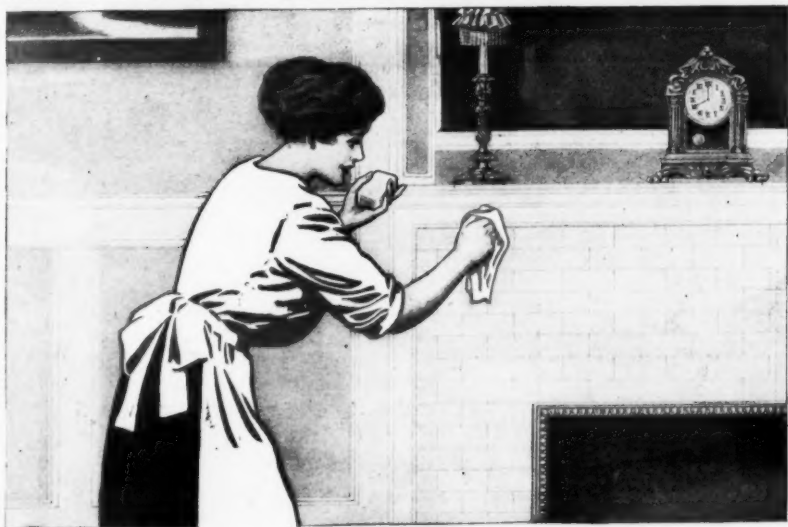
quirements of those who demand "Standard" quality at less expense. All "Standard" fixtures, with care, will last a lifetime. And no fixture is genuine *unless it bears the guarantee label*. In order to avoid substitution of inferior fixtures, specify "Standard" goods in writing (not verbally) and make sure that you get them.

## Standard Sanitary Mfg. Co. Dept. O PITTSBURGH, PA.

New York . . . 35 West 31st Street  
Chicago . . . 900 S. Michigan Ave.  
Philadelphia . . . 1128 Walnut Street  
Toronto, Can. . . 59 Richmond St., E.  
Pittsburgh . . . 106 Federal Street  
St. Louis . . . 100 N. Fourth Street  
Cincinnati . . . 633 Walnut Street

Nashville . . . 315 Tenth Avenue, So.  
New Orleans, Baronne & St. Joseph Sts.  
Montreal, Can. . . 215 Coristine Bldg.  
Boston . . . John Hancock Bldg.  
Louisville . . . 319-23 W. Main Street  
Cleveland . . . 648 Huron Road, S. E.  
Hamilton, Can. . . 20-28 Jackson St., W.

London . . . 57-60 Holborn Viaduct  
Houston, Tex. . . Preston and Smith Sts.  
San Francisco, Cal. . . Merchants National Bank Building  
Washington, D. C. . . Southern Bldg.  
Toledo, Ohio . . . 311-321 Erie Street  
Fort Worth, Tex. . . Front and Jones Sts.



# Bon Ami

## Use it on Tiles

Yes, Bon Ami cleans tile beautifully and doesn't hurt the glaze a bit.

You couldn't use scouring soap on tile—it would scratch and dull the fine brittle surface.

On the other hand plain water is too weak to dissolve and rub away the smoke and dust stain.

In Bon Ami the mineral is ground to the fineness of flour—too fine to scratch—whereas scouring soaps contain

hard grit which grinds and scratches things.

That's why you can use Bon Ami on the delicate shining surfaces of tile or plate glass or on fine painted woodwork, with perfect safety.

*Like the  
new-hatched  
chick,  
it "Hasn't  
scratched yet!"*



THE BON AMI COMPANY, NEW YORK



*"Not the Least of the Feast!"*

Use  
Swift's Premium Bacon  
as a Rasher for the  
Thanksgiving Turkey



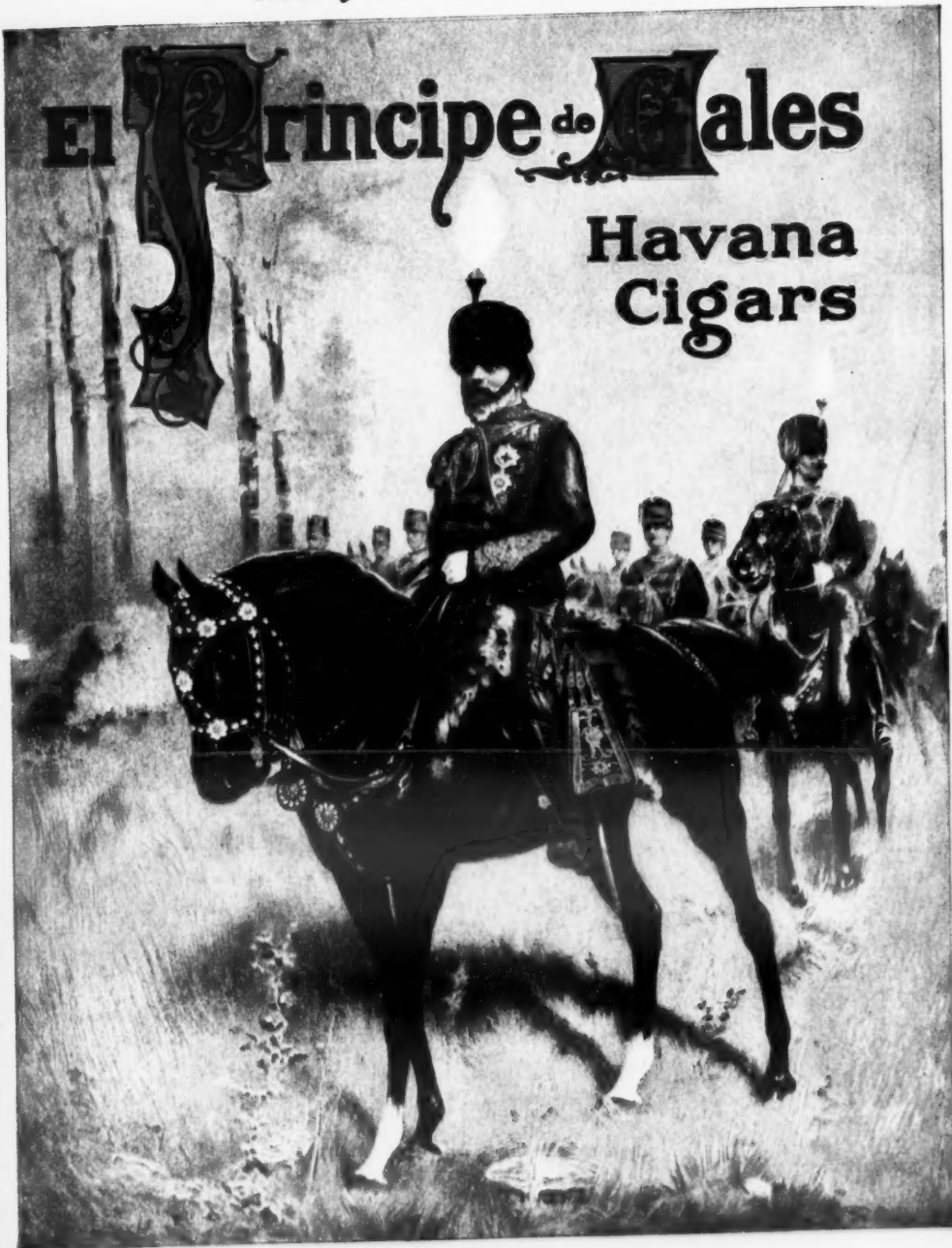
Swift's  
Premium  
Bacon

Swift & Company, U. S. A.

*Have you smoked one lately?*

# El Principe de Gales

**Havana  
Cigars**



**Named in Honor of a Prince  
Smoked by Gentlemen Everywhere**